

S. 3498

At the request of Mr. VOINOVICH, the names of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3498, a bill to amend title 46, United States Code, to extend the exemption from the fire-retardant materials construction requirement for vessels operating within the Boundary Line.

S. 3509

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3509, a bill to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Iraq and potential security breakdown resulting from the mass displacement of Iraqis inside Iraq and as refugees into neighboring countries.

S. 3521

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3521, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 95 Dogwood Street in Cary, Mississippi, as the "Spencer Byrd Powers Jr. Post Office".

S. 3526

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 3526, a bill to enhance drug trafficking interdiction by creating a Federal felony relating to operating or embarking in a submersible or semi-submersible vessel without nationality and on an international voyage.

S. RES. 616

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 616, a resolution reducing maternal mortality both at home and abroad.

S. RES. 660

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 660, a resolution condemning ongoing sales of arms to belligerents in Sudan, including the Government of Sudan, and calling for both a cessation of such sales and an expansion of the United Nations embargo on arms sales to Sudan.

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 660, supra.

S. RES. 661

At the request of Mr. DODD, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH) and the Senator from Penn-

sylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 661, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Spina Bifida Awareness Month.

S. RES. 666

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BOND), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 666, a resolution recognizing and honoring the 50th anniversary of the founding of AARP.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. LUGAR (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 3529. A bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2010 through 2014 to provide assistance to foreign countries to promote food security, to stimulate rural economies, and to improve emergency response to food crises, to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I am pleased today to announce the introduction of the Global Food Security Act of 2008. I would like to thank my friend Senator CASEY for lending his ideas and support to this bipartisan effort. I also thank USAID Administrator Henrietta Fore, who took an early interest in potential legislation. Her leadership is very much appreciated. Finally, I want to thank the members of USAID's informal food security team, who advised us on problems and possible legislative solutions.

As we know, food prices started a steep climb in the fall of 2007 and continued to increase during the spring of this year. The crisis has abated somewhat, largely due to the drop in energy prices. Nonetheless, this episode demonstrated that there are significant structural challenges to attaining global food security. The system is vulnerable to periodic disruptions that both expose and exacerbate deeper problems.

We live in a world where nearly 1 billion people suffer from chronic food insecurity. When droughts occur, hurricanes hit, or other disruptions arise, transitory food insecurity can put as many as 100 million people at a time in grave danger. In fact, the World Food Program reports that 25,000 people die each day from malnutrition-related causes. Health experts advise us that a diverse and secure food supply has major health benefits, including increasing child survival, improving cognitive and physical development of children, and increasing immune system function including resistance to HIV/AIDS.

Food insecurity is a global tragedy, but it is also an opportunity for the U.S. The U.S. is the indisputable world leader in agricultural production and technology. A more focused effort on our part to join with other nations to increase yields, improve food distribu-

tion, and broaden agricultural knowledge could begin a new era in U.S. diplomacy. Such an effort could solidify relationships with nations where, up to now, we have had few positive contacts. It could improve our broader trade relations and serve as a model for similar endeavors in the areas of energy and scientific cooperation. Achieving food security for all people also would have profound implications for peace and U.S. national security. Hungry people are desperate people, and desperation often sows the seeds of conflict and extremism.

The U.S. has always stood for big ideas—from the founding of the Republic on the basis of freedom to President Kennedy's vow to put a man on the moon. One of today's big ideas should be the eradication of hunger. We can bring America's dedication to science, innovation, technology, and education together to lead an effort devoted to overcoming the obstacles to food security.

The Global Food Security Act of 2008, is a 5-year authorization that seeks to provide solutions that will have the greatest effect. First, it creates a Special Coordinator for Global Food Security and puts that person in charge of developing a food security strategy. We call on the development of that strategy to take a whole-of-government approach and to work with other international donors, the NGO community, and the private sector.

Second, the bill authorizes additional resources for agricultural productivity and rural development. U.S. foreign assistance for agriculture has declined by nearly 70 percent since the 1980s. Globally, only four percent of official development assistance from all donors is allocated for agriculture. This amounts to neglect of what should be considered one of the most vital sectors in the alleviation of poverty. Food shortages are likely to recur frequently if the U.S. and the global community fail to invest in agricultural productivity in the developing world.

World leaders must understand that over the long term, satisfying global demand for more and better food can be achieved only by increasing yields per acre. In the 1930s, my father, Marvin Lugar, produced corn yields of approximately 40 to 50 bushels per acre. Today, the Lugar farm yields about 150 bushels per acre on the same land in Marion County, IN. The Green Revolution, from 1965 to 1985, saw the introduction of high yield seeds and improved agricultural techniques that resulted in a near doubling of cereal grain production per acre over 20 years. But yields may have to be doubled or tripled again.

Increasing acreage under production will not satisfy the growth in food demand, and these steps come with serious environmental and national security costs. We need a second green revolution that will benefit developed and developing nations alike.

Recent studies have demonstrated that funds spent in agriculture can be

up to four times more beneficial to economic growth than spending in other areas. It seems, therefore, that our overall foreign aid strategy would benefit from restoring agriculture programs to their former prominence. The bill increases funding for these programs in the first year by \$750 million. The increase would reach \$2.5 billion in year 5. Because those who subsist on less than one dollar a day spend at least half their incomes on food, according to the International Food Policy Research Institute, the bill highlights the need to focus on those living in extreme poverty.

In thinking about how to approach agricultural productivity, we tried to draw from the experience of U.S. land grant colleges and the contributions they have made to U.S. agriculture. The bill creates a new program that would strengthen institutions of higher education in the areas of agriculture sciences, research and extension programs. Investments in human capital and institutional capacity are important to developing a robust agricultural sector.

Universities and research centers can play an important role in achieving technological advances that are appropriate to local conditions. As such, the bill calls for increasing collaborative research on the full range of biotechnological advances including genetically modified technologies.

Third, the bill improves the U.S. emergency response to food crises by creating a separate Emergency Food Assistance Fund that can make local and regional purchases of food, where appropriate. Funds can be used for emergency food and agricultural assistance. The Government Accountability Office reports that it can often take 4 to 6 months from the time a crisis occurs until U.S. food shipments arrive. Our intention is to provide USAID with the flexibility to respond to emergencies more quickly, without supplanting other food programs such as P.L. 480.

I hope that our bill will begin a productive dialogue on how our government can be a more effective partner with NGO and private actors in promoting food security. There is no good reason why nearly a billion people should be food insecure or that the world should have to endure the social upheaval and risks of conflict that this insecurity causes.

I look forward to working with colleagues to improve the U.S. and global efforts to alleviate food insecurity and advance agricultural knowledge and technology worldwide.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 3529

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Global Food Security Act of 2008”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Findings.
- Sec. 3. Definitions.

TITLE I—POLICY OBJECTIVES, PLANNING AND COORDINATION

- Sec. 101. Statement of policy.
- Sec. 102. Comprehensive food security strategy.
- Sec. 103. Reports.

TITLE II—BILATERAL PROGRAMS

- Sec. 201. Agriculture, rural development, and nutrition.
- Sec. 202. Agricultural research.
- Sec. 203. Higher education collaboration for technology, agriculture, research and extension.

TITLE III—EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO FOOD CRISES

- Sec. 301. Emergency food assistance account.
- Sec. 302. Authorization of appropriations.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

- (1) Nearly 1,000,000,000 people worldwide suffer from food insecurity, defined as a lack of access to sufficient food to meet dietary needs for an active and healthy life.
- (2) The number of food insecure increased from 849,000,000 in 2006 to 982,000,000 in 2007.
- (3) The World Food Programme reports that 25,000 people die each day from malnutrition-related causes.
- (4) The food security situation of lower income countries is projected to continue to deteriorate over the next decade.
- (5) Nearly half of the world’s food insecure live in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- (6) The agricultural sector comprises large portions of the total labor force in many developing countries, as high as 70 to 80 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa, where it also contributes about 35 percent of the total gross national product (GDP).
- (7) Agriculture has been shown to be an efficient engine of economic growth in developing countries.
- (8) A diverse and secure food supply has health benefits, including increasing child survival, improving cognitive and physical development of children, and increasing immune system function including resistance to HIV/AIDS.
- (9) Rapid increases in global food costs since 2007 threaten to significantly undermine gains achieved in poverty reduction and health programs.
- (10) The poor in developing countries spend as much as 50 to 70 percent of their incomes on food.
- (11) Three out of five of those suffering from hunger are rural small-scale agricultural families. One out of five is a rural landless laborer, and another one-fifth are urban poor, according to the United Nations Hunger Task Force.
- (12) A comprehensive approach to food security should encompass improvements in nutrition, education, agricultural infrastructure and productivity, finance and markets, safety net programs, household incomes, and emergency preparedness.

(10) The poor in developing countries spend as much as 50 to 70 percent of their incomes on food.

(11) Three out of five of those suffering from hunger are rural small-scale agricultural families. One out of five is a rural landless laborer, and another one-fifth are urban poor, according to the United Nations Hunger Task Force.

(12) A comprehensive approach to food security should encompass improvements in nutrition, education, agricultural infrastructure and productivity, finance and markets, safety net programs, household incomes, and emergency preparedness.

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(3) CHRONIC FOOD INSECURITY.—The term “chronic food insecurity” means ongoing and persistent lack of access to sufficient food to meet dietary needs for an active and healthy life.

(4) EXTREME POVERTY.—The term “extreme poverty” means income of less than half of the poverty level as defined by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for the relevant year.

(5) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term “institution of higher education” means educational institutions providing post-secondary education and training.

TITLE I—POLICY OBJECTIVES, PLANNING AND COORDINATION

SEC. 101. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States to promote global food security, to improve agricultural productivity, to support the development of institutions of higher learning that will enhance human capacity, a knowledge economy, agricultural research and technology, and the dissemination of farming techniques to all levels of the agriculture sector, and to support sustainable farming methods.

SEC. 102. COMPREHENSIVE FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY.

(a) SPECIAL COORDINATOR.—The President shall designate an individual to serve in the Executive Office of the President as the Special Coordinator for Food Security. The coordinator shall advise and assist the President by—

- (1) advising the President on international food security issues;
- (2) taking such actions as are necessary to ensure the coordination of the food security efforts and programs of the United States, including the activities of Federal agencies, and
- (3) overseeing the development and implementation of the strategy described in subsection (b).

(b) CONTENT OF STRATEGY.—The strategy referred to in subsection (a)(3) is a comprehensive food security strategy that—

- (1) includes specific and measurable goals, benchmarks and time frames, and a plan of action to achieve the objectives described in section 101;
- (2) seeks to encourage and leverage, to the greatest extent possible—

(A) private sector participation, including through the Global Development Alliances of the United States Agency for International Development and other measures; and

(B) the coordination of United States food security efforts with similar efforts of international organizations, international financial institutions, the governments of developing and developed countries, and United States and international nongovernmental organizations;

(3) provides appropriate linkages with United States international health programs, such as the President’s Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS Relief;

(4) reflects a whole-of-government approach that incorporates and encompasses the programs of relevant Federal departments and agencies that engage in some aspect of food security, including the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Defense, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the Department of the Treasury, the Office of the United States Trade Representative, and the Department of Health and Human Services; and

(5) provides annual monitoring and evaluation of the program addressing progress toward access to food, availability of food, utilization of food, and risk factors associated with food insecure populations.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—The United States Agency for International Development shall be the lead agency in implementing the strategy described in subsection (b).

SEC. 103. REPORTS.

(a) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than December 31 of each year thereafter through 2014, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the implementation of the strategy described in section 102(b).

(2) CONTENT.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) a copy of the strategy and an indication of any changes made in the strategy during the preceding calendar year;

(B) an assessment of progress made during the preceding calendar year toward meeting the objectives described in section 101 and the specific goals, benchmarks, and time frames specified in the strategy described in section 102(b);

(C) a description of United States Government programs contributing to the achievement of the objectives described in section 101, including the amounts expended on such programs during the preceding fiscal year; and

(D) an assessment of United States efforts to encourage and leverage private sector participation in United States food security programs and to coordinate such programs with similar efforts of international organizations, international financial institutions, the governments of developing and developed countries, and United States and international nongovernmental organizations.

(3) GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the submission of each report under paragraph (1), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that contains—

(A) a review of, and comments addressing, the report submitted under paragraph (1); and

(B) recommendations relating to any additional actions the Comptroller General determines to be necessary to improve a global food security strategy and its implementation.

(b) PROGRAM REVIEW.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 4 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report containing—

(A) an assessment of progress made during the preceding four years toward meeting the objectives described in section 101 and the specific goals, benchmarks, and time frames specified in the strategy described in section 102(b); and

(B) an evaluation of the impact during the preceding four years of United States food security programs on food security, health, and economic growth in countries suffering from chronic food insecurity.

(2) BASIS FOR REPORT.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall be based on assessments and impact evaluations utilizing sound quantitative and qualitative methodologies and techniques for the behavioral sciences.

TITLE II—BILATERAL PROGRAMS

SEC. 201. AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND NUTRITION.

(a) AUTHORITY.—Section 103(a)(1) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151a(a)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking “; and” and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(D) to expand the economic participation of people living in extreme poverty and those who lack access to agriculturally productive land, including through productive safety net programs and health and nutrition programs, and to integrate those living in extreme poverty into the economy.”.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the President to provide assistance under section 103 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151a) for the purpose of carrying out activities under this section, in addition to funds otherwise available for such purpose—

(1) \$750,000,000 for fiscal year 2010;

(2) \$1,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2011;

(3) \$1,500,000,000 for fiscal year 2012;

(4) \$2,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2013; and

(5) \$2,500,000,000 for fiscal year 2014.

(c) COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH SUPPORT PROGRAM.—Of the amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (b), up to \$35,000,000 may be made available annually for the Collaborative Research Support Program for fiscal years 2011 through 2014.

(d) CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH.—Of the amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (b), up to \$45,000,000 may be made available annually for core long-term research for the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research for fiscal years 2011 through 2014.

SEC. 202. AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH.

Section 103A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151a–1) is amended in the first sentence—

(1) by striking “, and (3) make” and inserting “, (3) make”; and

(2) by striking the period at the end and inserting “, and (4) include research on biotechnological advances appropriate to local ecological conditions, including genetically modified technology.”.

SEC. 203. HIGHER EDUCATION COLLABORATION FOR TECHNOLOGY, AGRICULTURE, RESEARCH AND EXTENSION.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Institutions of higher education can promote a robust agriculture sector through investments in human capital, research and technology, and extension services.

(2) Enrollment levels in higher education are 5 percent in Africa, 10 percent in South Asia, 19 percent in East Asia, and 23 percent in North Africa and the Middle East.

(3) Universities in the United States have a history of serving as engines of development.

(4) Many universities in the United States have experience in partnering with foreign universities on faculty and student exchanges, curriculum development, and joint research projects.

(5) According to a World Bank study, higher education contributes to national productivity, raises living standards, and improves a country’s ability to compete globally.

(6) United States foreign assistance support for higher education has declined from the 1990s.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to provide United States assistance for the development of higher educational capacity in the field of agriculture in a manner that promotes economic growth in rural areas, the alleviation of poverty and malnutrition, nutritional diversity, and good governance.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ASSISTANCE PLAN.—The term “assistance plan” means a multi-year plan devel-

oped by the United States Agency for International Development in coordination with a foreign government addressing assistance for agricultural education programs.

(2) BOARD.—The term “Board” means the Board for Higher Education Collaboration for Technology, Agriculture, Research, and Extension.

(3) EDUCATION CENTER OF EXCELLENCE.—The term “education center of excellence” means an institution of higher education that is designated as the lead educational institution for purposes of the assistance plan.

(4) ELIGIBLE COUNTRY.—The term “eligible country” means a country that meets the requirements of subsection (h).

(d) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall establish a program to be known as the Higher Education Collaboration for Technology, Agriculture, Research, and Extension (in this section referred to as the “Program” or “HECTARE”) for the purpose of providing assistance in support of policies and programs in eligible countries that advance agricultural productivity and hunger alleviation through partnerships with institutions of higher education.

(e) FORM OF ASSISTANCE.—Assistance may be provided under this section in the form of grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts to or with eligible entities described in subsection (i) and shall be provided pursuant to assistance plans as described in subsection (g). Assistance may not be provided under this section in the form of loans.

(f) USE OF FUNDS.—Assistance provided under this section may be used to provide support to education centers of excellence in eligible countries for the following purposes:

(1) Academic exchange programs for students, faculty members, and school administrators with other education of centers of excellence and with universities in the United States.

(2) Strengthening agriculture sciences curricula.

(3) Increasing research capacity.

(4) Improving the dissemination of appropriate information and technology to farmers.

(g) ASSISTANCE PLANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall provide assistance under this section pursuant to an assistance plan developed in coordination with an eligible country that establishes a multi-year plan for significantly improving agricultural productivity and investing in rural economies through the strengthening of agricultural programs at institutions of higher learning.

(2) ELEMENTS.—An assistance plan should—

(A) take into account the national development strategy of the eligible country;

(B) identify an education center of excellence devoted to agricultural sciences (in this paragraph referred to as a “center”);

(C) identify the partnerships between the center and other institutions of higher learning, including schools or research institutions in the United States and foreign countries, government agencies, including local and regional governments, private sector entities, and civil society;

(D) identify appropriate channels for dissemination of farming techniques to the field; and

(E) identify the center’s plans for—

(i) conducting agricultural research and technology;

(ii) strengthening the teaching of agriculture science, including programs aimed at curriculum, faculty, and students;

(iii) providing rural outreach services (extension); and

(iv) improving university administration.

(3) **COORDINATION.**—The Administrator, as appropriate, shall coordinate the development of assistance plans with the Global AIDS/HIV Coordinator of the Department of State to ensure coordination of such plans with education programs provided for in section 204(c) of the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003 (22 U.S.C. 7623(c)).

(h) **ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES.**—

(1) **CRITERIA.**—The Administrator shall identify eligible countries for purposes of this section. Such determination shall be based, to the maximum extent possible, upon objective and quantifiable indicators of a country's demonstrated commitment to the following:

(A) Investments in, and support for, rural economies, including the protection of private property rights, the promotion of private sector growth and sustainable management of natural resources, the rights of women, and the well-being of women and children.

(B) Raising agricultural productivity of small- and medium-sized farms.

(C) Alleviating poverty and hunger among the entire population.

(D) Strengthening the system of higher education institutions with regard to agricultural science, research, and technology.

(E) The wide dissemination of farming techniques.

(F) Working with other international partners, such as universities in the United States, other foreign universities, civil society, and private business and research institutions.

(G) Good governance, transparency, and anti-corruption policies.

(2) **ADDITIONAL FACTORS.**—The Administrator, in selecting eligible countries, shall consider—

(A) the extent to which the country clearly meets or exceeds the eligibility criteria;

(B) the opportunity to increase agricultural productivity, enhance human and institutional capacity, and reduce hunger in the country;

(C) the availability of funds to carry out this section; and

(D) the percentage of the country's population that faces chronic food insecurity.

(i) **ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.**—Entities eligible for assistance under this section are the following:

(1) Universities in the United States working in partnership with institutions of higher education in eligible countries.

(2) Education centers of excellence and other institutions of higher education in eligible countries.

(3) National governments of eligible countries.

(4) Regional or local governmental units of eligible countries.

(5) Nongovernmental organizations and private entities.

(j) **BOARD FOR GLOBAL AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.**—

(1) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Administrator shall establish a permanent Board for Global Agricultural Education (in this section referred to as the "Board") for purposes of assisting in the administration of the programs authorized under this section.

(2) **MEMBERSHIP.**—The Board shall consist of 7 members, of whom—

(A) not less than 4 shall be selected from universities in the United States; and

(B) not less than 3 shall be selected from representatives of nongovernmental organizations devoted to agricultural research and education.

(3) **DUTIES.**—The duties of the Board shall include the following:

(A) Responsibility for advising the Administrator on issues related to the planning,

implementation, and monitoring of activities described in this section.

(B) Advising the Administrator in the formulation of basic policy, program design, procedures, and criteria for the Program.

(C) Advising the Administrator on the qualifications of interested institutions of higher learning based on—

(i) their ability to work collaboratively to improve agricultural production, scientific research, and the dissemination of sound agricultural technologies;

(ii) their commitment to expanding and applying their academic, teaching, research, and outreach capacities; and

(iii) their commitment to partner with private organizations, civil society, and government entities.

(D) Advising the Administrator on which developing nations could benefit from programs carried out under this section and have an interest in establishing or developing agricultural institutions that engage in teaching, research, or extension services.

(4) **TERM.**—Terms of members shall be set by the Administrator at the time of appointment.

(5) **REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES.**—Members of the Board shall be entitled to such reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of their duties (including per diem in lieu of subsistence while away from their homes or regular place of business) as the Administrator deems appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

(k) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to the President for the purpose of carrying out activities under this section—

- (1) \$100,000,000 for fiscal year 2010;
- (2) \$200,000,000 for fiscal year 2011;
- (3) \$300,000,000 for fiscal year 2012;
- (4) \$400,000,000 for fiscal year 2013; and
- (5) \$500,000,000 for fiscal year 2014.

(l) **DISCLOSURE OF FUNDING RECEIVED BY UNITED STATES UNIVERSITIES.**—The Administrator shall prescribe regulations providing for the utilization by universities in the United States of alternative sources of public and private funding to carry out the purposes of this section and requiring the disclosure, not less than annually, of all such alternative funding, both prospective and received.

(m) **ANNUAL REPORT.**—Not later than October 1, 2009, and annually thereafter, the President shall submit to Congress a report detailing the activities carried out under this section during the preceding fiscal year and containing a projection of programs and activities to be conducted in the following year.

TITLE III—EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO FOOD CRISES

SEC. 301. EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE ACCOUNT.

(a) **AUTHORITY.**—Whenever the President determines it to be important to the national interest, the President may furnish on such terms and conditions as he may determine appropriate assistance under this Act or the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151 et seq.) for the purpose of meeting unexpected urgent food assistance needs, notwithstanding any provision of law which restricts assistance to foreign countries.

(b) **ESTABLISHMENT OF ACCOUNT.**—

(1) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established a United States Emergency Food Assistance Fund to carry out the purposes of this section (in this section referred to as the "Fund").

(2) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There are authorized to be appropriated to the President from time to time such sums as may be necessary for the Fund to carry out the purposes of this section, except that

no amount of funds may be appropriated which, when added to amounts previously appropriated but not yet obligated for such purpose, would cause the total of such appropriated amounts to exceed \$500,000,000.

(3) **AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.**—Amounts appropriated pursuant to this section shall remain available until expended.

(c) **USE OF FUNDS.**—Assistance provided under this section may include the local and regional purchase and distribution of food, and the provision of emergency non-food assistance.

(d) **LIMITED DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY.**—The authority under subsection (a) may be delegated to the Administrator, provided that not more than \$100,000,000 may be made available in any fiscal year pursuant to determinations made by the Administrator pursuant to the delegation of such authority.

(e) **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**—The Administration shall submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees not later than 5 days before providing assistance pursuant to a determination made under this section. The report shall indicate the unexpected urgent food needs to be addressed by the assistance and the amount of assistance to be provided.

SEC. 302. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated \$500,000,000 for fiscal year 2010 for the purpose of carrying out this title.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. ENSIGN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. FEINGOLD, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. SMITH, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. DODD, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. BAYH, Mr. KERRY, Mr. HARKIN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. OBAMA, Mrs. CLINTON, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. BIDEN):

S. 3532. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the Secretary of the Treasury to establish the standard mileage rate for use of a passenger automobile for purposes of the charitable contributions deduction and to exclude charitable mileage reimbursements from gross income; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce a bill, the Giving Incentives to Volunteers Everywhere Act. In today's economic climate, Americans need relief from sky-rocketing oil and gas prices. This applies to everyone, including people who engage in much-needed volunteer work. In July, I introduced a similar bill to help volunteers. It gave the Internal Revenue Service authority to change the mileage rate—currently set by statute at 14 cents per mile—for calculating the deductible cost of operating a vehicle for charitable purposes. We can't let an out-of-date mileage rate exacerbate the pinch at the pump for volunteers who selflessly provide so many vital goods and services in every community across America. After working with Congressman LEWIS and Congressman RAMSTAD on compromise language we have improved the original bill. This compromise legislation will provide immediate relief for volunteers serving our elderly, poor, frail, and at-risk Americans. I am pleased that the

senior Senator from Maine, Senator SNOWE, and my other colleagues, the senior Senator from New York, Senator SCHUMER, the junior Senator from Nevada, Senator ENSIGN, the senior Senator from Maryland, Senator MIKULSKI, and the senior Senator from Iowa, Senator GRASSLEY, and the junior Senator from Wisconsin, Senator FEINGOLD, are original cosponsors of this bill and I thank all of them for their support.

The Internal Revenue Code does not fix a rate for individuals who are required to use their own vehicle for work, or for individuals taking a mileage deduction for moving purposes. The IRS is able to increase the deduction amount for these purposes to reflect the current economic climate and dramatically higher fuel prices. This is exactly what the IRS recently did.

As of July 1st, the IRS modified the standard mileage rates for computing the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, medical, or moving expenses. The revised standard mileage rate for business purposes increased from 50.5 cents per mile to 58.5 cents. For medical and moving expenses, the IRS increased the rate from 19 cents per mile to 27 cents per mile. I think the Nation's volunteers who travel on behalf of charitable organizations deserve an increase in their mileage rate, too.

My bill gives the IRS flexibility in setting the rate so that volunteers for charitable organizations could be given the same tax benefit accruing for moving, medical, and business expenses. It also provides a floor for volunteers, not allowing their rate to be set lower than moving and medical rate. In today's climate of increasing food and fuel prices, this bill will help relieve some of the pressure on charitable organizations and their volunteers. Additionally, this bill will allow the organization to reimburse the volunteer up to the business rate without any tax impact to volunteers.

Take Meals on Wheels, for example. This organization delivers nutritious meals and other nutrition services to men and women who are elderly, homebound, disabled, frail, or otherwise at-risk. The services Meals on Wheels provides significantly improve the recipients' quality of life and health, and often help to postpone institutionalization.

Over the past year, there has been nearly a 20 percent increase in fuel and food prices, coupled with reduced Government funding and fewer donations across the country. Nearly 60 percent of the estimated 5,000 programs that operate under the auspices of the Meals on Wheels Association of America have lost volunteers, in large part because it is too expensive for the volunteers to drive back and forth. Nearly half the programs have eliminated routes or consolidated meal services. About 38 percent of the programs have switched to delivering frozen meals, and about 30 percent are cutting personal visits from 5 days a week to one.

In Maryland, the Central Maryland Meals on Wheels has experienced an increase of 7 percent in food costs and suppliers are charging higher delivery fees. The cost to fill up the vans with gas has increased. Fuel costs averaged \$72,538.70 in fiscal year 2007; this year, the costs have jumped to \$86,790.63. This is an organization with volunteers serving over 3,100 elderly, disabled, frail and at-risk Marylanders. Its volunteers deserve relief from high gas prices just as much as people who use their car for work or for medical purposes or for moving.

Throughout the U.S., Meals on Wheels served over 3 million people and more than 250 million meals in fiscal year 2006. This is just one of thousands of charitable organizations. We need to encourage and support the Meals on Wheels volunteers and all other volunteers who need their cars to help their neighbors and communities. The Giving Incentives to Volunteers Everywhere bill will do just that, and I hope my colleagues will support it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 3532

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 "Giving Incentives to Volunteers Everywhere Act of 2008" or the "GIVE Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. DETERMINATION OF STANDARD MILEAGE RATE FOR CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS DEDUCTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (i) of section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to standard mileage rate for use of passenger automobile) is amended to read as follows:

"(1) STANDARD MILEAGE RATE FOR USE OF PASSENGER AUTOMOBILE.—For purposes of computing the deduction under this section for use of a passenger automobile, the standard mileage rate shall be the rate determined by the Secretary, which rate shall not be less than the standard mileage rate used for purposes of section 213."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to miles traveled after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. EXCLUSION FROM GROSS INCOME FOR CHARITABLE MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part III of subchapter B of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to items specifically excluded from gross income) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 139C. CHARITABLE MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—In the case of an individual, gross income shall not include amounts received from an organization described in section 170(c)(2) as reimbursement of operating expenses with respect to the use of a passenger automobile for the benefit of such organization.

"(b) LIMITATION.—The amount excluded from gross income under subsection (a) shall not exceed the product of the standard mileage rate used for purposes of section 162 multiplied by the number of miles traveled for which such reimbursement is made.

"(c) APPLICATION TO VOLUNTEER SERVICES ONLY.—Subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to any expenses relating to the performance of services for compensation.

"(d) NO DOUBLE BENEFIT.—A taxpayer may not claim a deduction or credit under any other provision of this title with respect to reimbursements excluded from income under subsection (a).

"(e) EXEMPTION FROM REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Section 6041 shall not apply with respect to reimbursements excluded from income under subsection (a).

"(f) MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS.—For purposes of this section, no exclusion shall be allowed under subsection (a) for any reimbursement unless with respect to such reimbursement the taxpayer meets substantiation requirements similar to the requirements of section 274(d)."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for part III of subchapter B of chapter 1 of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

"Sec. 139C. Charitable mileage reimbursement."

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to miles traveled after the date of the enactment of this Act.

By Mr. DODD (for himself and Mr. VOINOVICH):

S. 3534. A bill to provide for the expansion of Federal programs to prevent and manage vision loss, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Vision Preservation Act of 2008 with my colleague Sen. GEORGE VOINOVICH. The goal of this legislation is to help Americans avoid the personal tragedy of unnecessary, preventable vision loss. This important legislation is supported by Prevent Blindness America, the American Foundation for the Blind, the American Academy of Ophthalmology, and the American Optometric Association.

Right now there are an estimated 80 million Americans suffering from potentially blinding eye disease. Three million more Americans struggle with low vision. 1.1 million more are legally blind. Glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, cataract and age-related macular degeneration, AMD, and other vision problems are costing tens of thousands of people in the United States their ability to see each year. With the aging baby boom generation moving toward retirement age, these numbers are expected to grow considerably. It is estimated that by 2030, the number of blind and visually impaired people will double if nothing is done.

Unsurprisingly, "The Economic Impact of Vision Problems: The Toll of Major Adult Eye Disorders, Visual Impairment, and Blindness on the U.S. Economy," a study conducted by Prevent Blindness America, reveals that vision loss carries significant cost to individuals, private insurers, health care providers, and the Federal government. The study indicates that the direct and indirect costs of vision loss among adults are \$51.4 billion. And over a lifetime, the cost for just one

person dealing with this terrible condition is \$566,000. The lifetime costs associated with just those Americans born with vision loss in 2000 is \$2.5 billion.

But what makes vision loss even more tragic is that half of all blindness is preventable if action is taken soon enough. There are many health and financial challenges our nation is facing that we may just have to weather. But here is one we can do something about—and we should. That is why Sen. VOINOVICH and I are introducing the Vision Preservation Act. This legislation would improve and strengthen important public health programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, and the Health Resources and Services Administration, HRSA. Specifically, it would expand existing public education and awareness efforts to empower Americans to do what is necessary to protect their own vision. This legislation would also incorporate vision screening, prevention, and rehabilitation into the Maternal and Child Health Block Grants and the Community Health Centers so low income Americans who are most likely to go without needed prevention and screening can be alerted to the early warning signs of vision loss. It would improve the training and education of health professionals so that they are better prepared to help their patients identify and deal with conditions that could lead to vision loss.

These are simple steps that we in the Senate can take to help make sure that millions of Americans can live without fear of losing their sight. I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill and a letter of support be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 3534

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 “Vision Preservation Act of 2008”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds as follows:

(1) An estimated 80 million Americans have a potentially blinding eye disease, and more than 19.1 million Americans report trouble seeing, even with eye glasses or contacts. At least 1.1 million Americans are legally blind, and 200,000 Americans experience profound vision loss. Refractive errors affect approximately one third of persons 40 years or older in the United States. Visual impairment is one of the 10 more frequent causes of disability in the United States.

(2) While it is believed that half of all blindness can be prevented, the number of Americans who are blind or visually impaired is expected to double by 2030.

(3) Vision loss can, especially without appropriate rehabilitation and skills training, significantly impact an individual’s ability to conduct activities of daily living, as well

as developmental learning, communicating, working, health, and quality of life.

(4) One in twenty preschoolers experience visual impairment which, if unaddressed, can affect learning ability, personality, and adjustment in school.

(5) It is estimated that blindness and visual impairment cost the Federal Government more than \$4 billion annually in benefits and lost taxable income, and cost the United States economy approximately \$51.4 billion annually in direct medical costs, direct non medical costs, and indirect costs such as lost productivity and wages.

(6) Vision rehabilitation helps people with vision loss to live safely and independently at home and in the community, reduce medication errors, cook and perform other daily activities reliably, and avoid accidents which may lead to injury or even the onset of additional disabilities, especially among older persons living with vision loss.

(7) Recognizing that the Nation requires a public health approach to visual impairment, the Department of Health and Human Services dedicated a portion of its Healthy People 2010 initiative to vision. The initiative set out as a goal the improvement of the Nation’s visual health through prevention, early detection, treatment, and rehabilitation.

(8) Greater efforts must be made at the Federal, State, and local levels to increase awareness of vision loss and its causes, its impact, the importance of early diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation, and effective prevention strategies.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that the Nation must have a full-scale integrated public health strategy to comprehensively address vision loss and its causes that, at a minimum, includes the following:

(1) Communication and education.

(2) Surveillance, epidemiology, and prevention research.

(3) Programs, policies, and systems change.

SEC. 3. VISION LOSS PREVENTION.

Part B of title III of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 243 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 317S the following:

“SEC. 317T. PREVENTIVE HEALTH MEASURES WITH RESPECT TO VISION LOSS.

“(a) COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Health Resources and Services Administration, and the National Institutes of Health, shall expand and intensify programs to increase awareness of vision problems, including awareness of—

“(A) the impact of vision problems; and

“(B) the importance of early diagnosis, management, and effective prevention and rehabilitation strategies.

“(2) ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary may—

“(A) conduct public service announcements and education campaigns;

“(B) enter into partnerships with eye-health professional organizations and other vision-related organizations;

“(C) conduct community disease prevention campaigns;

“(D) conduct testing, evaluation, and model training for vision screeners based on scientific studies; and

“(E) evaluate strategies to reduce barriers to access to treatment by optometrists and ophthalmologists.

“(3) EVALUATION.—In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary shall—

“(A) establish appropriate measurements for public awareness of vision problems;

“(B) establish appropriate measurements to determine the effectiveness of existing campaigns to increase awareness of vision problems;

“(C) establish quantitative benchmarks for determining the effectiveness of activities carried out under this subsection; and

“(D) not later than 12 months after the date of the enactment of this section, submit a report to the Congress on the results achieved through such activities.

“(b) SURVEILLANCE, EPIDEMIOLOGY, AND HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall expand and intensify activities to establish a solid scientific base of knowledge on the prevention, control, and rehabilitation of vision problems and related disabilities.

“(2) ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary may—

“(A) create a national ongoing surveillance system;

“(B) identify and test screening modalities;

“(C) evaluate strategies to reduce barriers to access to treatment by optometrists, ophthalmologists, and other vision rehabilitation professionals;

“(D) evaluate the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of current and future interventions and community strategies;

“(E) update and improve knowledge about the true costs of vision problems and related disabilities; and

“(F) require the Surgeon General to assess the state of vision care and vision rehabilitation in the United States.

“(c) PROGRAMS, POLICIES, AND SYSTEMS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall expand and intensify research within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the prevention and management of vision loss.

“(2) ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary may—

“(A) build partnerships with voluntary health organizations, nonprofit vision rehabilitation agencies, Federal, State, and local public health agencies, eye health professional organizations, and organizations with an interest in vision issues;

“(B) work with health care systems to better address vision problems and associated disabilities; and

“(C) award grants for community outreach regarding vision loss to health care institutions and national vision organizations with broad community presence.”

SEC. 4. EXPANSION OF VISION PROGRAMS UNDER THE MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICE BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.

Section 501(a)(3) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 701(a)(3)) is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of subparagraph (E);

(2) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (F) and inserting “, and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(G) introduce core performance measures on eye health by incorporating vision screening and examination standards into State programs under this title, based on scientific studies.”

SEC. 5. PREVENTION AND TREATMENT FOR UNDERSERVED, MINORITY, AND OTHER POPULATIONS.

(a) EXPANSION AND INTENSIFICATION OF VISION PROGRAMS.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (in this section referred to as the “Secretary”) shall expand and intensify programs targeted to prevent vision loss, treat eye and vision conditions, and rehabilitate people of all ages who are blind or partially sighted in underserved and minority communities, including the following:

(1) Vision care services at community health centers receiving assistance under section 330 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b).

(2) Vision rehabilitation programs at vision rehabilitation agencies, eye clinics, and hospitals.

(b) **VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR VISION SCREENING.**—The Secretary, in consultation with eye-health professional organizations and other vision-related organizations, shall develop voluntary guidelines to ensure the quality of vision screening and appropriate referral for comprehensive eye examinations and subsequent vision rehabilitation services.

SEC. 6. VISION REHABILITATION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS.

(a) **AUTHORITY.**—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (in this section referred to as the “Secretary”) may make grants to eligible institutions of higher education or nonprofit organizations for the purpose of activities described in subsection (b) relating to vision rehabilitation professional development.

(b) **USE OF FUNDS.**—The Secretary may not make a grant to an institution of higher education or a nonprofit organization under this section unless the institution or organization agrees to use the grant for the following:

(1) Developing and offering preparatory and continuing education training opportunities (incorporating state-of-the-art approaches, technologies, and therapies to meet the unique needs of older adults with vision loss) in—

(A) geriatrics among vision rehabilitation professionals, including professionals in the vision rehabilitation therapy, orientation and mobility, and low vision therapy fields; and

(B) vision rehabilitation among occupational therapists and others in related rehabilitation and health disciplines.

(2) Conducting, and disseminating the findings and conclusions of, research on the effectiveness of preparatory and continuing education training under paragraph (1).

(3) Developing and disseminating interdisciplinary course curricula for use in the preparation of new professionals in vision rehabilitation, occupational therapy, and related rehabilitation and health disciplines.

(4) Educating physicians, nurses, and other health care providers about the value of vision rehabilitation, to increase appropriate referral by such professionals for the full range of vision rehabilitation services available to older individuals with vision loss.

(c) **ELIGIBILITY.**—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, an entity shall be a university, academic medical center, national or regional nonprofit organization, community rehabilitation provider, or allied health education program, or a consortium of such entities, that—

(1) offers or coordinates education or training activities among professionals described in subsection (b)(1); or

(2) agrees to use the grant to expand its capacity to coordinate such activities.

(d) **DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS.**—In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall ensure that grantees offer or coordinate training for current and emerging professionals—

(1) from a variety of geographic regions and a range of different types and sizes of settings and facilities, including settings and facilities located in rural, urban, and suburban areas; and

(2) serving a variety of populations of older individuals with vision loss, including racial and ethnic minorities, low-income individuals, and other underserved populations.

(e) **APPLICATION.**—To seek a grant under this section, an entity shall submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION,
Alexandria, VA, September 19, 2008.
Hon. CHRIS DODD,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR DODD: The American Optometric Association (AOA), representing over 36,000 doctors of optometry who are the frontline providers of eye and vision care, optometric researchers, educators and optometry students, deeply appreciates your continued outstanding leadership on priority eye and vision care issues before Congress.

With that in mind, it is my pleasure to inform you that the AOA wholly endorses and will be working to pass the Vision Preservation Act of 2008, legislation you have crafted to strengthen federal vision programs designed to prevent and manage vision loss.

Vision impairments are a growing problem in the US—particularly with the aging of the babyboomer generation. Approximately 80 million Americans have a potentially blinding eye disease such as diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, cataract, and age-related macular degeneration. If we fail to take decisive action, the number of blind and visually impaired Americans will double in the next 25 years, even though half of all blindness is preventable.

By introducing the Vision Preservation Act, you are providing important leadership on vision-related programs and policies at the federal level. This bill’s focus on increasing public awareness about vision problems, bolstering research at the National Eye Institute, and improving access to vision care at Federally-Qualified Health Centers, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, and under the Medicaid program are key components that optometry and others in the vision community are completely united behind.

As the Vision Preservation Act of 2008 is considered, be assured that we will continue to work with you and your colleagues in Congress to place maximum emphasis on early identification of those individuals at risk for vision loss and need access to quality care.

If we can be of any assistance on this legislation, or any other vision related questions, please contact Alicia Kerry Jones.

Sincerely,

MICHELE HARANIN, O.D.,
Chair, AOA Federal Relations Committee.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 669—RECOGNIZING THE EFFORTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUTSTANDING HISPANIC SCIENTISTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MARTINEZ (for himself, Mr. NELSON of Florida, and Mr. SALAZAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

S. RES. 669

Whereas the purpose of the National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Award is to recognize outstanding Hispanic scientists in the United States who promote a greater public understanding of science and motivate Hispanic youth to develop an interest in science;

Whereas the 8th annual National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Gala will be held at the Museum of Science and Industry in Tampa, Florida, on Saturday, October 11, 2008;

Whereas proceeds from the National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Gala support

scholarships for Hispanic boys and girls to participate in the Youth Enriched by Science Program of the Museum of Science and Industry, known as the “YES! Team”;

Whereas a need to acknowledge the work and effort of outstanding Hispanic scientists in the United States has led to the selection of Dr. Lydia Villa-Komaroff as the honoree of the 8th annual National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Award;

Whereas Dr. Villa-Komaroff is an internationally recognized molecular biologist who is deeply committed to the recruitment and retention of minorities in science;

Whereas Dr. Villa-Komaroff currently serves as Chief Executive Officer of Cytonome, Inc., a company building the first optical cell sorter capable of supporting rapid, sterile sorting of human cells for therapeutic use; and

Whereas Dr. Villa-Komaroff was a key member of the research team that first demonstrated that bacterial cells produce insulin and her varied and active professional life includes research positions at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University, and the University of Massachusetts Medical Center: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes efforts to educate, support, and provide hope for the Hispanic community, including efforts—

(A) to honor outstanding Hispanic scientists in the United States at the annual National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Gala; and

(B) to motivate Hispanic youth to study science through “Meet the Hispanic Scientist Day”, an opportunity for Hispanic youth to meet the honoree of the National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Award; and

(2) congratulates the 2008 National Hispanic Scientist of the Year designated by the Museum of Science and Industry, for ongoing dedication to improving the quality of, and access to, science and engineering research and education.

SENATE RESOLUTION 670—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 25, 2008, AS “NATIONAL FIRST RESPONDER APPRECIATION DAY”

Mr. ALLARD (for himself, Mr. CASEY, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 670

Whereas millions of Americans have benefited from the courageous service of first responders across the United States;

Whereas the police, fire, emergency medical service, and public health personnel (commonly known as “first responders”) work devotedly and selflessly on behalf of the people of the United States, regardless of the peril or hazard to themselves;

Whereas in emergency situations, first responders carry out the critical role of protecting and ensuring public safety;