

getting them help from the community. It is much easier to prevent homelessness than it is to bring someone out of it. The supportive services that will be provided under the legislation include greater access to housing assistance, physical and mental health services, health insurance, and vocational and financial counseling. North Carolina is home to over 770,000 veterans, and the VA estimates that over 40,000 North Carolina veterans live in poverty. We must do all we can to ensure that the men and women who've served our Nation in the military do not suffer the indignity of going to bed at night without a roof over their heads.

Second, to help service-disabled veterans cope with the high cost of gasoline, S. 2162 would codify VA's new travel reimbursement rate for veterans who drive to their medical appointments at VA, and would index that rate so that future increases are automatic. The rate was increased in January from 11 cents to 28.5 cents a mile by VA Secretary James Peake. In addition, this bill will reverse the increase in the deductible that was made in January.

Third, the legislation directs a 3-year pilot program on the provision of contract care to veterans residing in highly rural areas where no VA facilities exist. It makes no sense for veterans in rural areas to travel hundreds of miles for their care when they could easily seek care at their own local community health care facilities. Not only will they be more likely to seek needed preventive care, they'll also avoid the high cost of gas to get to a VA appointment. I am pleased about the potential for this pilot program and look forward to it being tested in rural States like North Carolina.

And fourth, I am pleased the legislation includes an expansion of a concept that was tested and that proved successful at the Asheville VA Medical Center. The concept was to consolidate VA's capability to bill and collect from private insurance companies into one site rather than retain that capability at multiple sites. The employees at the Asheville VA Consolidated Patient Accounting Center have cultivated their expertise, and I am pleased to say that the pilot has been a success, generating millions of dollars in additional revenue. The legislation would expand on that concept by directing VA to open seven other centers around the country within the next 5 years. I am excited at the prospect of enhancing VA's revenue collection so that additional dollars can be invested in the health care delivery of our veterans.

These are just a few of the good provisions of this legislation. For my colleagues interested in a fuller accounting of the bill's provisions I would refer them to the Joint Explanatory Statement that will be made part of the RECORD.

Before I conclude, I would like to personally thank the chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs,

Senator AKAKA, for his cooperation with me on this bill. The chairman has no equal when it comes to handling negotiations with integrity and fairness. I would also like to thank the chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Chairman BOB FILNER, and ranking member STEVE BUYER. Finally, I would like to thank all of the staff members of the Veterans' Committees who worked on this bill, as well as the hard-working staff of the Senate and House Legislative Counsel's office who performed the technical drafting.

This is a good bill. I am proud of the work the House and Senate have done on it. And I ask my colleagues for their support.

BREAST CANCER AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH ACT OF 2007

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 1157, which was received from the House.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1157) to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to make grants for the development and operation of research centers regarding environmental factors that may be related to the etiology of breast cancer.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. I ask unanimous consent the bill be read three times and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 1157) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am pleased that both chambers of Congress passed the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act this week.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of women in this country receive the diagnosis of breast cancer. Breast cancer will strike approximately 1 in 8 American women in her lifetime, with a new case diagnosed every 2 minutes.

We have made remarkable progress in the area of breast cancer, but we still do not know what causes breast cancer. Scientists have identified some risk factors, but those factors help explain fewer than 30 percent of cases.

The Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act would help to establish a national strategy to study the potential links between the environment and breast cancer and would authorize funding for such research. The resulting discoveries could be critical to improving our knowledge of this complex illness, which could lead to new treatments and perhaps, one day, a cure.

Too many women have wanted too long for this legislation to become law. Since former Senator Lincoln Chafee and I first introduced legislation in 2000, it is estimated that 2 million women have been diagnosed with breast cancer and almost 300,000 have died. One of these women, a lifelong Nevadan named Deanna Jensen, championed this legislation and stayed in regular contact with my staff, even while enduring a grueling regimen of radiation and chemotherapy. Sadly, Deanna Jensen lost her battle with cancer on January 7, 2007.

Last session, I had hoped that this legislation would finally become a reality. It was reported out of the Senate HELP Committee, and despite overwhelming bipartisan support for this legislation, the Republican majority would not schedule floor time to consider this bill. On several occasions, I tried to pass this legislation by unanimous consent, but with every attempt, one Senator objected and prevented the Senate from passing this important legislation.

This year, thanks to Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions—HELP—Committee Chairman KENNEDY's leadership and that of Senators CLINTON and HATCH, the Senate HELP Committee reported this bill favorably. However, the minority continued to object to our efforts to pass this legislation by unanimous consent. On more than one occasion, I proposed that we consider this legislation under a time agreement that would have permitted a reasonable number of germane amendments and a recorded vote on the bill. Those offers were also rejected, in spite of the fact that over two-thirds of the members of the Senate were cosponsors of this bill.

Over the past several months, this legislation has been the focus of negotiations between the bill sponsors in both chambers and those members whose strong concerns have prevented this legislation from advancing for so long. The resulting compromise is a strong step in the right direction and will finally set us on the path towards obtaining a better understanding of the relationship between the development of breast cancer and the environment. I am pleased that we were able to pass this legislation this week and hope the President will sign it into law without further delay.

COMPREHENSIVE TUBERCULOSIS ELIMINATION ACT OF 2007

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 1532, which was received from the House.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1532) to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to making progress toward the goal of eliminating tuberculosis, and for other purposes.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. I ask unanimous consent the bill be read three times and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statement related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 1532) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

TO MAKE A TECHNICAL CORRECTION IN THE NET 911 IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2008

Ms. LANDRIEU. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 6946, which was received from the House.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6946) to make a technical correction in the NET 911 Improvement Act of 2008.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. I ask unanimous consent the bill be read three times and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 6946) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 3646

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk. I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title for the first time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3636) to authorize and expedite lease sales within the Outer Continental Shelf, and for other purposes.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I now ask for a second reading. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

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

SUDAN ARMS SALES

Ms. LANDRIEU. I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 660 and the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 660) 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.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the amendment which is at the desk be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

The amendment (No. 5675) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the resolution)

Strike paragraphs (3) through (5) of the resolving clause and insert the following:

(3) in light of the well-documented existence of arms in Darfur that were transferred from China and Russia and the insistence of the Government of Sudan that it will not abide by the embargo, all United Nations member states should immediately cease all arms sales to the Government of Sudan; and

(4) the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations should use the voice and vote of the United States in the United Nations Security Council to seek an appropriate expansion of the arms embargo imposed by Security Council Resolutions 1556 and 1591.

The resolution (S. Res. 660), as amended, was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, with its preamble, reads as follows:

(The resolution will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would ask my distinguished friend from Louisiana, the senior Senator from Louisiana, to allow me to conduct some business. It will take a couple of minutes.

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

FEDERAL RAILROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. REID. I ask the Chair to lay before the Senate a message from the House with respect to H.R. 2095, the Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message:

Resolved, That the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, H.R. 2095, an Act to amend title 49, United States Code, to prevent railroad fatalities, injuries, and hazardous materials releases, to authorize the Federal Railroad Safety Administration, and for other purposes, do pass with a House amendment to the Senate amendment.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I move to concur in the House amendment with the Senate amendment to H.R. 2095, and I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2095, the Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act.

Richard Durbin, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Kay Bailey Hutchison, John Warner, Gordon H. Smith, Olympia J. Snowe, Jim Webb, Jon Tester, Barbara Boxer, Dianne Feinstein, Frank R. Lautenberg, Charles E. Schumer, Thomas R. Carper, John D. Rockefeller, IV, Benjamin L. Cardin, Byron L. Dorgan, Patty Murray, Daniel K. Inouye.

AMENDMENT NO. 5677

Mr. REID. I now move to concur in the House amendment with the Senate amendment to H.R. 2095 with an amendment which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] moves to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the House amendment with an amendment numbered 5677.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike "2" and insert "1".

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 5678

Mr. REID. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 5678 to amendment No. 5677.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, insert the following: The provisions of this Act shall become effective in 2 days after enactment.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that there be no motions to refer in order during the pendency of this message.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote occur at 12:30 p.m. Monday, September 29, and that the mandatory quorum be waived.