

“The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that describes the assistance provided under this Act during the preceding 180-day period.”

The many requirements of this report are intended as a way for Congress to assess how effectively U.S. funds are being spent, shortfalls in U.S. resources that hinder the use of such funds, and steps the Government of Pakistan has taken to advance our mutual interests in countering extremism and nuclear proliferation and strengthening democratic institutions.

There is no intent to, and nothing in this Act in any way suggests that there should be, any U.S. role in micromanaging internal Pakistani affairs, including the promotion of Pakistani military officers or the internal operations of the Pakistani military.

The reports envisioned in this Section are not binding on Pakistan, and require only the provision of information by the executive branch to the U.S. Congress, in furtherance of the Act’s stated purpose of strengthening civilian institutions and the democratically-elected Government of Pakistan.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
Washington, DC, September 29, 2009.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI, H-232 Capitol Building,
Washington, DC.

Speaker of the House of Representatives,

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,

House of Representatives, H-204 Capitol Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER AND MR. REPUBLICAN LEADER: I write to express the State Department’s strong support of S. 1707, the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009.

The bipartisan Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009 will be an essential tool in support of our national security interests and underscores a multifaceted, multi-year commitment between the peoples of the United States and Pakistan.

I appreciate the hard work by many in both the House and the Senate in reaching this reconciled text, and urge its passage as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON.

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE,
Washington, DC, September 25, 2009.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,

Speaker of the House of Representatives, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. HARRY REID,

Senate Majority Leader,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER AND MR. MAJORITY LEADER: As the United States Government continues to implement its strategy to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is important that we strongly signal to the Pakistani people our long-term commitment to partnering with them to combat terrorism and extremism.

We appreciate that the House and Senate have worked hard to finalize the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009, a bipartisan bill that would underscore a long-term, multi-year commitment to increase civilian assistance to Pakistan.

The bill as revised addresses the key concerns we previously raised in an April 28, 2009, letter. We appreciated the opportunity to work with your committees on these concerns.

This bill would support U.S. national security interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Department of Defense strongly supports moving this bill to final passage by the

House and Senate as expeditiously as possible.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that, from the standpoint of the Administration’s program, there is no objection to the presentation of this letter.

Sincerely,

ROBERT M. GATES,
Secretary of Defense.
M.G. MULLEN,
Admiral, U.S. Navy.●

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VERMONT STUDENT ASSISTANCE CORPORATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, VSAC, for three important milestones it has reached this year. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the VSAC Talent Search Program, the 10th anniversary of the VSAC Gear UP Program, and the 10th anniversary of the Vermont Higher Education Investment Program.

Although small in size, Vermont has a long history of establishing national models for making higher education accessible to disadvantaged students. The University of Vermont provided Senator Justin Morrill the inspiration for the first and second Morrill Act. The student loan programs which have made college possible for millions of students each year bear the name of my former colleague and dear friend, Senator Bob Stafford.

The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation has continued this tradition through innovative programs to encourage first-generation and low-income students to pursue their career and education goals. Each year more than 47,000 students and parents participate in one or more of their career, education and financial aid programs. In addition, VSAC has been at the forefront of efforts to reach young people with programs that link career ambitions with educational requirements and opportunities. This past year, VSAC’s Start Where You Are program won a prestigious WebAward for Education Standard of Excellence from the Web Marketing Association. In a more traditional vein, VSAC staff was recognized this year with the David Swedlow Memorial College Access Staff Award of Excellence from the National College Access Network.

Several States have established not-for-profit State agencies to administer financial aid and to provide their residents and students attending their schools with quality counseling services and low-cost loans. Vermont pioneered this movement by creating the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation more than 40 years ago. VSAC has worked hard to establish and maintain strong and longstanding working relationships with Vermont’s higher education institutions as well as K-12 schools to provide outreach programs critical to the economic vitality of Vermont.

The U.S. Department of Education has proposed that all future student

loans be made through direct lending from the Federal Government to students. The Direct Loan program is projected to save students millions of dollars in fees and interest payments. Additional savings would be distributed to States for school construction and grants for K-12 education. Unfortunately this proposal does not include a role for not-for-profit State agencies such as VSAC. I believe that is a significant oversight. Vermonters have come to rely on the high quality, comprehensive programs that VSAC offers. A one-size-fits-all Federal direct loan program does not acknowledge all of the hard work and experience of nonprofits such as VSAC and their tremendous staff. As this proposal makes its way through Congress, Senator SANDERS, Congressman WELCH, and I will be working for changes to ensure a role for nonprofit State financial aid agencies such as VSAC.

I congratulate VSAC on their landmark 40th anniversary, and I hope there will be many more to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING AMERICAN GOLD STAR MOTHER’S DAY

● Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize that September 27, 2009, is designated as “Gold Star Mother’s Day.”

It is fitting that we recognize the American Gold Star Mothers, whose sons and daughters have died in defense of the ideals of individual liberty. They should be honored and offered respect and gratitude for their personal sacrifice.

Gold Star Mother’s Day is intended to honor women who deserve special recognition and gratitude for their tremendous personal loss on behalf of our country.

During the early days of World War I, a Blue Star was used to represent each soldier in military service of the United States, and as the war progressed and soldiers were killed or wounded in combat or died from wounds or disease, a Gold Star superimposed over the Blue Star designated the loss of these individuals. This tradition recognized soldiers for their ultimate sacrifice to our country, and the Gold Star offered families an outward symbol by which to honor the loss of a loved one. In 1928, the Gold Star tradition was formalized in Washington, DC, by a group of mothers who had lost sons and daughters in service to their country and met to form the American Gold Star Mothers organization. This organization is a non-denominational, non-profitable, and nonpolitical organization that is dedicated in supporting veterans, military families, and servicemembers returning from our present-day battlefields.

In 1936, President Franklin Roosevelt issued a proclamation which recognized Gold Star Mothers for their strength and inspiration to this country. The

services rendered to the United States by the mothers of America have strengthened and inspired our Nation throughout history, and we honor the Gold Star Mothers of America for their courage and their strength.●

RECOGNIZING AUBURN MANUFACTURING, INCORPORATED

● Ms. SNOWE, Mr. President, today I celebrate the vital work that a small business in my home State of Maine is doing to provide extreme temperature textiles to dozens of industries worldwide. Auburn Manufacturing, Incorporated—or AMI—of Mechanic Falls is a veritable leader in its field, and has been designing and manufacturing advanced industrial textiles since its inception in 1979.

Auburn Manufacturing's name is synonymous with quality and dependability because of its longstanding dedication to providing customers with products made using the most cutting-edge technologies. AMI develops and manufactures top-of-the-line products for welding protection, gasketing and sealing, and pipe and hose covering, as well as safety apparel like gloves and clothing. And the company's 48 employees make all of its products at the company's central Maine facility.

One of AMI's major new products is the Ever Green Cut 'n Wrap insulated cover. Designed for companies seeking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and heat loss while saving on energy costs, the custom-fit insulation blankets fit flexibly over valves and piping and reduce room temperatures for workers in extreme conditions. In fact, the Ever Green Cut 'n Wrap kits can reduce heat loss by over 85 percent, and they have a payback of less than 1 year. Last month, AMI received a seed grant from the Maine Technology Institute to help the company commercialize this forward-thinking, environmentally friendly product.

Additionally, earlier this year Auburn Manufacturing announced that it had received dual contracts to provide the U.S. Navy with the company's remarkable AMI-SIL fabrics that are used for hot work protection during the repair of naval ships. The Navy has certainly demonstrated its approval of this impressive product, having awarded AMI five contracts over the past 15 years to supply it with more than 1.25 million yards of fabric.

Another quality that makes AMI special is its status as a Women's Business Enterprise, a certification made by the highly regarded Women's Business Enterprise National Council. Additionally, AMI owner Kathie Leonard was recently named one of Mainebiz's 2009 Women to Watch. In my estimation, Kathie Leonard has been a woman to watch throughout her entire career. She founded AMI in 1979—at the age of 27—when she realized the vast potential of new heat-resistant fabrics which were developed to replace asbestos. Over the company's 30-year history,

Ms. Leonard has been a part of several major professional organizations both national and local, including the National Insulation Association and the Lewiston-Auburn Economic Growth Council, which she previously chaired. She readily admits that these connections have helped her company grow into the giant it is today.

The quality of AMI's numerous products afford its clients a sense of confidence that has solidified the company's status as a premier developer and manufacturer of extreme textiles nationwide. I congratulate Kathie Leonard and everyone at Auburn Manufacturing for the incredible work they do, and I wish them much success in the future.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:25 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1593. An act to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate a segment of Illabot Creek in Skagit County, Washington, as a component of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

H.R. 2877. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 76 Brookside Avenue in Chester, New York, as the "1st Lieutenant Louis Allen Post Office".

H.R. 3433. An act to amend the North American Wetlands Conservation Act to establish requirements regarding payment of the non-Federal share of the costs of wetlands conservation projects in Canada that are funded under that Act, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3476. An act to reauthorize the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Citizen Advisory Commission.

H.R. 3537. An act to amend and reauthorize the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program Act of 1994.

H.R. 3606. An act to amend the Truth in Lending Act to make a technical correction to an amendment made by the Credit CARD Act of 2009.

H.R. 3689. An act to provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc. to establish a Vietnam Veterans Memorial visitor center, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 214(a) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 15344), the Speaker appoints from private life Ms. Lillie Coney of Washington, DC, as a member of the Election Assistance Commission of Advisors on the part of the House.

At 3:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 621. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of the establishment of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 6:08 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by

Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 1717. An act to authorize major medical facility leases for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2010, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1016. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide advance appropriations authority for certain accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2997. An act making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 965. An act to amend the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 to provide for the continuing authorization of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 1593. An act to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate a segment of Illabot Creek in Skagit County, Washington, as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 2877. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 76 Brookside Avenue in Chester, New York, as the "1st Lieutenant Louis Allen Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3433. An act to amend the North American Wetlands Conservation Act to establish requirements regarding payment of the non-Federal share of the costs of wetlands conservation projects in Canada that are funded under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 3476. An act to reauthorize the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Citizen Advisory Commission; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 3537. An act to amend and reauthorize the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program Act of 1994; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 3689. An act to provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc. to establish a Vietnam Veterans Memorial visitor center, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 1776. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the update under the Medicare physician fee schedule for years beginning with 2010 and to sunset the application of the sustainable growth rate formula, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated: