

for me. I got a fair shot because I grew up in an America that made it a priority to invest in young people.

I believe in an America that puts students ahead of billionaires, an America that puts education within reach of every kid who works hard, an America that will give every kid a fair shot at building a future.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 2294. A bill to require a survey of the preferences of members of the Armed Forces regarding military pay and benefits; to the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, today I am introducing, with Senator CORNYN, the Servicemembers' Compensation Empowerment Act of 2014. This bipartisan legislation will direct the Department of Defense's (DoD) Military Retirement and Modernization Commission to formally survey military personnel on pay and benefits, and to take relative preferences into account as the Commission prepares its recommendations.

Virginia is more connected to the military than any other State. As I have traveled throughout the Commonwealth, I have had the opportunity to meet and discuss military benefits with servicemembers, veterans, and their families. The overriding concern on the part of our military and their families is sequestration. It has forced the military to allow the budget to drive strategy, rather than strategy to drive our budget. As a member of both the Senate Armed Services and Budget Committees, I firmly believe that all budget proposals should be considered carefully in light of the need for deficit reduction, the need to maintain a strong military, and the responsibility we have to support our servicemembers with resources to complete their mission.

The Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission was established by the fiscal year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, to conduct a review of military compensation and retirement systems and to make recommendations to enable the quality of life of our military and their families and achieve fiscal sustainability for the future. As of now, no official study has been conducted by the Commission to determine the relative value of compensation and benefit programs to the military personnel who depend on them. Under my legislation, the Commission would be required to survey randomly selected members of the military concerning basic pay, housing allowances, bonuses and special pay, dependent healthcare and retirement pay and report its results to Congress.

Servicemembers deserve to have their voices heard as changes to the pay and benefits packages they depend on most are considered. By formally surveying military personnel on the benefits they value most, we can en-

sure the Military Retirement and Modernization Commission and members of Congress have the best possible understanding of how cost-saving proposals would impact our servicemembers and their families, allowing them to make decisions with evidence-based analysis.

This bill gives servicemembers a voice in the process, and will assure that reforms will take a scientific study into account. We must balance the competing needs to control rising costs with ensuring we meet the needs of military personnel and their families.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 438—CONGRATULATING THE STUDENTS, PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND ADMINISTRATORS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES FOR THEIR ONGOING CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION, AND SUPPORTING THE IDEALS AND GOALS OF THE 15TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS WEEK, TO BE HELD MAY 4 THROUGH MAY 10, 2014

Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. KIRK, Mr. BENNET, Mr. VITTER, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. COONS, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BURR, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. SCOTT) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to.:

S. RES. 438

Whereas charter schools are public schools that do not charge tuition and enroll any student who wants to attend a charter school, often through a random lottery when too many students want to attend a single charter school;

Whereas high-performing charter schools deliver a high-quality public education and challenge all students to reach their potential for academic success;

Whereas charter schools promote innovation and excellence in public education;

Whereas charter schools throughout the United States provide millions of families with diverse and innovative educational options for their children;

Whereas high-performing charter schools are dramatically increasing student achievement and college-going rates;

Whereas charter schools are authorized by a designated public entity and—

(1) respond to the needs of communities, families, and students in the United States; and

(2) promote the principles of quality, accountability, choice, and innovation;

Whereas in exchange for flexibility and autonomy, charter schools are held accountable by the public authorizers of such charter schools for improving student achievement and for sound financial and operational management;

Whereas charter schools are required to meet the student achievement accountability requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) in the same manner as traditional public schools;

Whereas charter schools often set higher expectations for students, beyond the re-

quirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.), to ensure that such charter schools are of high quality and truly accountable to the public;

Whereas 42 States and the District of Columbia have enacted laws authorizing charter schools;

Whereas more than 6,400 charter schools serve more than 2,500,000 children;

Whereas in the United States—

(1) in 135 school districts, more than 10 percent of public school students are enrolled in charter schools;

(2) in 32 school districts, at least 20 percent of public school students are enrolled in charter schools; and

(3) in 7 districts, at least 30 percent of public school students are enrolled in charter schools;

Whereas charter schools improve the achievement of students enrolled in such charter schools and collaborate with traditional public schools to improve public education for all students;

Whereas charter schools—

(1) give parents the freedom to choose public schools;

(2) routinely measure parental satisfaction levels; and

(3) must prove their ongoing success to parents, policymakers, and the communities served by such charter schools;

Whereas approximately 920,000 students were on waiting lists to attend charter schools before the beginning of the 2012–2013 academic year; and

Whereas the 15th annual National Charter Schools Week is scheduled to be celebrated the week of May 4 through May 10, 2014: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the students, families, teachers, and administrators of charter schools across the United States for—

(A) their ongoing contributions to education;

(B) their impressive strides in closing the academic achievement gap in schools in the United States, particularly schools with some of the most disadvantaged students in both rural and urban communities; and

(C) improving and strengthening the public school system in the United States;

(2) supports the ideals and goals of the 15th annual National Charter Schools Week, a week-long celebration to be held the week of May 4 through May 10, 2014, in communities throughout the United States; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to hold appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities during National Charter Schools Week to demonstrate support for charter schools.

SENATE RESOLUTION 439—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL SAFE DIGGING MONTH

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. BLUNT) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 439

Whereas each year, the underground utility infrastructure of the United States, including pipelines, electric, gas, telecommunications, water, sewer, and cable television lines, is jeopardized by unintentional damage caused by those who fail to have underground lines located prior to digging;

Whereas some utility lines are buried only a few inches underground, making the lines easy to strike, even during shallow digging projects;