

S. 3737

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 3737, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act and title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make the provision of technical services for medical imaging examinations and radiation therapy treatments safer, more accurate, and less costly.

S. 3819

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3819, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce the mileage threshold for the deduction for National Guard and Reservists overnight travel expenses.

S. 3981

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 3981, a bill to provide for a temporary extension of unemployment insurance provisions.

S. 3984

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3984, a bill to amend and extend the Museum and Library Services Act, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 680

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 680, a resolution supporting international tiger conservation efforts and the upcoming Global Tiger Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia.

AMENDMENT NO. 4618

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4618 intended to be proposed to S. 3454, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2011 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 4697

At the request of Mr. JOHANNIS, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4697 intended to be proposed to S. 510, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to the safety of the food supply.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. SESSIONS, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. THUNE):

S. 3989. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow an offset against income tax refunds to pay for restitution and other State judicial

debts that are past-due; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today, along with my colleagues Senators SESSIONS, MCCASKILL, and THUNE, I am introducing a bill to help crime victims and state courts recover the restitution and fees that are owed to them. This bipartisan bill would accomplish this worthy goal by intercepting tax refunds of deadbeat debtors who've failed to pay restitution or court fees. If enacted, this bill would essentially allow state courts to cross-reference outstanding debts with the IRS and use existing procedures to withhold tax refunds in order to satisfy past due debts.

This bill would not only deliver justice to crime victims who are owed restitution, but would also provide much-needed resources to help keep court rooms open and court programs operating. At a time when our State and local governments are struggling to find funding for vital programs—including keeping courthouse doors open—unpaid court fees represent an important source of revenue that should be captured. This bill would help close budget gaps and provide additional revenue without raising taxes or imposing any new costs or burdens. In fact, participation in the program would be optional for states, but I expect most states to participate and to benefit greatly from this bill.

This bill would operate the same way as the very successful child support debt collection system. The bill will allow states to share information on outstanding restitution owed and court debts with the IRS, which would then be required to intercept any Federal tax refunds of debtors and send that money to the victim or court owed that debt.

It has been estimated by the National Center for State Courts that outstanding court debts across the country total approximately \$15 billion. In my home State of Oregon alone, the outstanding restitution and court fee debt amount is \$987 million. Only a portion of outstanding debts are owed by individuals who will receive Federal tax refunds, so a portion of court debts would not be collected immediately. Nonetheless, the State of Oregon estimates that passage of this bill would allow the state to collect \$30 million per year.

Without this straight-forward and efficient mechanism, the collection of victim restitution and court debts is a costly and time-consuming process. Enactment of this bill would reduce the fiscal cost and administrative burden that victims and courts bear in attempting to collect those debts. Again, in the midst of a challenging fiscal crisis, it only makes common sense to collect revenues that are already owed—through an efficient and convenient method.

Because this bill would benefit both the court system, and those who rely upon it, the Court Fee Tax Intercept Act is endorsed by a broad array of

court, government, law enforcement, and crime victims organizations. The bill is supported by the National Center for Victims of Crime, the National District Attorneys Association, the American Probation and Parole Association, the Conference of Chief Justices, the Conference of State Court Administrators, the National Association for Court Managers, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Association of Counties, and the Government Finance Officers Association.

I urge all colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation.

By Mr. REID:

S. 3991. A bill to provide collective bargaining rights for public safety officers employed by States or their political subdivisions; read the first time.

Mr. REID. 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. 3991

*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 "Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 2010".

#### SEC. 2. DECLARATION OF PURPOSE AND POLICY.

The Congress declares that the following is the policy of the United States:

(1) Labor-management relationships and partnerships are based on trust, mutual respect, open communication, bilateral consensual problem solving, and shared accountability. Labor-management cooperation fully utilizes the strengths of both parties to best serve the interests of the public, operating as a team, to carry out the public safety mission in a quality work environment. In many public safety agencies, it is the union that provides the institutional stability as elected leaders and appointees come and go.

(2) State and local public safety officers play an essential role in the efforts of the United States to detect, prevent, and respond to terrorist attacks, and to respond to natural disasters, hazardous materials, and other mass casualty incidents. State and local public safety officers, as first responders, are a component of our Nation's National Incident Management System, developed by the Department of Homeland Security to coordinate response to and recovery from terrorism, major natural disasters, and other major emergencies. Public safety employer-employee cooperation is essential in meeting these needs and is, therefore, in the National interest.

(3) The Federal Government needs to encourage conciliation, mediation, and voluntary arbitration to aid and encourage employers and the representatives of their employees to reach and maintain agreements concerning rates of pay, hours, and working conditions, and to make all reasonable efforts through negotiations to settle their differences by mutual agreement reached through collective bargaining or by such methods as may be provided for in any applicable agreement for the settlement of disputes.