S. 3902

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 3902, a bill to amend the Insurrection Act to curtail violations against the civil liberties of the people of the United States, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 49

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 49, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing the Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. COLLINS:

S. 3907. A bill to provide that all critical access hospitals are eligible for loans under the paycheck protection program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

PPP FOR CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITALS ACT

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation to allow nonprofit critical access hospitals (as defined by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) that are undergoing Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganizations to apply for forgivable loans under the Paycheck Protection Program, if they are otherwise eligible. The language of my bill, the ''PPP Critical Access Hospitals Act,'' mirrors language originally introduced by Rep. GOLDEN that was included in the House-passed ''HEROES Act.''

While hospitals are not prohibited from participating in the PPP, those that have previously or are currently under bankruptcy protection have been unable to access PPP funds, due to an interpretation of underlying Small Business Administration 7(a) program rules. While I recognize the importance of protecting taxpayer investments in the SBA 7(a) program, the PPP program, which I coauthored along with Senators RUBIO, CARDIN, and SHAHEEN, is by design largely forgivable when used for eligible expenditures.

The hospitals that would benefit from this bill are critical infrastructure in the COVID–19 response effort, and many have experienced substantial increases in expenses associated with preparing for and responding to the pandemic. They simultaneously faced sharp declines in revenue associated with declining patient volumes due to the cancellation of routine and elective procedures, in order to protect public health and conserve limited supplies of Personal Protective Equipment, consistent with guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

While these entities are few in number, they are vitally important to the communities they serve, both as frontline health care providers during this public health emergency and as anchor institutions that provide the paychecks and local economic stability that Congress intended the Paycheck Protection Program to preserve. These institutions need temporary financial assistance to weather sharp revenue decreases that have resulted from Federal and State instructions to cancel elective medical procedures as part of COVID–19 response preparedness. Expanding the PPP to include these key employers will allow them to keep their doors open until they can resume normal operations once pandemic-related disruptions to their operations have passed.

Two institutions in Maine that would benefit from this bill are Penobscot Valley Hospital in Lincoln, and Calais Regional Hospital, in Calais. Both are in the midst of Chapter 11 proceedings, and both have suffered serious revenue shortfalls due to the cancellation or scaling back of elective procedures during the pandemic.

The bill I am introducing today is carefully targeted to address a unique financial situation that frontline critical access hospitals face during this public health emergency. I urge my colleagues to support it.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 609—RECOGNIZING THAT FOR 45 YEARS, PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND THE UNITED STATES HAVE SHARED A CLOSE FRIENDSHIP BASED ON SHARED GOALS OF STABILITY, PROSPERITY, AND PEACE IN THE REGION, AND EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL CONTINUE TO REMAIN A STRONG, RELIABLE, AND ACTIVE PARTNER IN THE PACIFIC

Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Ms. HIRONO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 609

Whereas Papua New Guinea became independent on September 16, 1975;

Whereas Papua New Guinea is a valued security partner of the United States, participating in the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, which sends members of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force to professional military education courses in the United States;

Whereas the United States has partnered with Papua New Guinea and Australia to modernize Papua New Guinea Defence Force's Lombrum Naval Base on Manus Island to assist Papua New Guinea in defending its sovereignty and maritime rights;

Whereas the United States Government supports cooperative activities with Papua New Guinea, including sustainable fisheries management, HIV/AIDS prevention, and care, and those authorized by the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act;

Whereas section 1252 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (Public Law 116–92) expands the number of countries that receive assistance under the Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Initiative, including Papua New Guinea;

Whereas Papua New Guinea hosted the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Summit in November 2018; and

Whereas Palm Desert, California and Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea are sister cities, a broad-based, long-term partnership to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation centered on people-to-people exchanges: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends Papua New Guinea on successfully maintaining a parliamentary democracy since independence, and its ongoing efforts to deliver greater transparency in infrastructure development and accountability in government;

(2) supports and affirms the full implementation of provisions of the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–409) with regard to deepening its cooperation with Papua New Guinea in areas of mutual interest, including fisheries and marine resource conservation, environmental challenges and resilience, global health, development and trade, people-to-people ties, and continuing United States assistance, as appropriate, to support the rule of law, good governance, and economic development;

(3) supports the Papua New Guinea Electrification Partnership in cooperation with Australia, Japan, and New Zealand, a project to connect 70 percent of the population to electricity by 2030, and the executive branch's commitment to principles-based, sustainable infrastructure development that is transparent, non-discriminatory, environmentally responsible, promotes fair and open competition, upholds robust standards, meets the genuine needs of the people of Papua New Guinea, and avoids unsustainable debt burdens; and

(4) recognizes Papua New Guinea's participation in multilateral institutions, including the United Nations, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, International Atomic Energy Agency, the World Trade Organization, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme, as well as the Pacific Islands Forum; Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF), the Pacific Community, and the South Pacific Regional Environmental Program.