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. 4097

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 4097 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4350, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 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. 4112

At the request of Mr. KING, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4112 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4350, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 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. 4133

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4133 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4350, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 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. 4148

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4148 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4350, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 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. 4211

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4211 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4350, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 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. 4218

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4218 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4350, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 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.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 3166. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to improve coverage of dental and oral health services for adults under Medicaid, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, the COVID–19 pandemic continues to take a tremendous toll on our Nation. Healthcare workers have valiantly served our communities throughout the crisis. Still, we face unprecedented challenges, and this moment calls for historic action.

The pandemic laid bare the gaps in our healthcare system and magnified longstanding inequities. Health inequities have been eating away at our communities for many years, which is why I have fought for policies to reduce economic and social inequalities overall—in short, access to nutrition, education, and housing, and increased funding for social and mental health services.

Earlier this year, Congress enacted some of those reforms in the American Rescue Plan Act, which is bringing much-needed help to Marylanders and Americans across the country. It was a strong investment to complement ongoing efforts to curtail the rapid spread of the virus, particularly as we grapple with more contagious variants, such as the Delta variant. Now, we have the opportunity to enhance that effort through the Build Back Better Act.

Even with the significant investments in healthcare over the last year and a half, Americans are struggling to pay for their basic healthcare needs, like prescription medications and mental healthcare. Waiting lists for home- and community-based services so individuals can age in place with dignity are in the thousands or tens of thousands in States around the country. In my State of Maryland, over 30,000 seniors and individuals are waiting to get access to home- and community-based services.

Now, we have the opportunity to make prescription drugs more affordable, expand access to home- and community-based services, extend enhanced financial support to individuals in the individual market, and permanently fund the Children's Health Insurance Program—CHIP.

We have been working on these problems for years and, in some cases, for over a decade. Congress is long overdue in acting to remedy them.

As we make these historic investments, we must also redouble our efforts to address the longstanding gaps in healthcare access. For instance, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make major reforms to the Medicare benefit.

Earlier this year, I reintroduced the Medicare Dental Benefit Act, which would add dental benefits to Medicare. It would help more than 56 million seniors and people with disabilities afford much-needed dental care.

According to the Wisdom Tooth Project of Oral Health America, nearly 70 percent of seniors lack or have limited access to dental insurance, and fewer than half have access to dental care each year. Those numbers are inexcusable. We should be working to strengthen and expand access to quality, affordable dental care for all Americans, regardless of age or income.

That is why, today, I am introducing, along with Senator STABENOW, the Medicaid Dental Benefit Act, which would extend comprehensive dental health benefits to tens of millions of low-income Americans.

Currently, States have flexibility to determine whether to provide dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees. Although most States, including my State, provide at least emergency dental services for adults, fewer than half of the States provide comprehensive dental care.

The consequences of such haphazard access could not be clearer: higher costs and worse outcomes.

A recent report by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality found that Black, Hispanic, and low-income adults visited the emergency room for dental care at the highest rates of any group in 2018.

Many of you have heard me speak before of the tragic loss of Deamonte Driver, a 12-year-old Prince George's County resident, in 2007. Deamonte's death was particularly heartbreaking because it was entirely preventable. What started out as a toothache turned into a severe brain infection that could have been prevented by an $80 extraction. After multiple surgeries and a lengthy hospital stay, Deamonte passed away nearly 15 years ago, just a few miles from this building.

It is imperative that we use this once-in-a-generation opportunity to increase access to dental care, which will improve the overall health of millions. To echo former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, ''there is no health without oral health.''

Adequate access to oral health is essential to preventing tragedies like the death of Deamonte Driver from ever happening again. Let us continue to build upon the progress made today in advancing access to oral health to protect individuals around the country.

As we work to pass this legislation, let us not lose sight of what is at stake. Just in the last few days, we have seen some of the best that American healthcare can provide, but also some of the worst.

Vaccines are making a critical difference in the fight against COVID–19, and just this Wednesday, they will be available to all ages 5 and older. It is a momentous achievement and a great relief to families and communities around the Nation.

At the same time, women in Texas are being denied access to reproductive healthcare while, on Monday, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments on two cases challenging the Texas anti-abortion law S.B. 8. Roe v. Wade has been the established legal precedent in this country for more than half a century, but anti-choice activists continue to push policies like S.B. 8 that are sending this country and women's health and well-being in the wrong direction. Women and their healthcare should not be under constant threat. If we fail the women of America, we fail our Nation.

Right now, we have a choice on how we as a nation want to emerge from the pandemic. We can continue on the same course, leaving millions of families behind, or we can answer the call of the American people and invest in high-quality, equitable healthcare.

Let us answer the call.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. WARREN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BROWN, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 3177. A bill to restore protections for Social Security, Railroad retirement, and Black Lung benefits from administrative offset; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, Social Security provides vital benefits millions of Americans who work and pay into the system with each paycheck. Because Social Security is fundamental to workers' retirement security, the law protected benefits from creditors. The only exceptions were unpaid Federal taxes, child support or alimony payments, and court-ordered victim restitution. These protections ensured that the social safety net programs would be there for basic needs. That protection was weakened over 20 years ago when the law was changed. Now, more and more seniors face cuts in their Social Security benefits because of student loan debts. While Congress and the Biden-Harris Administration took significant steps to protect Americans from facing crushing debt during a global pandemic, exempting the economic impact payments from garnishment and extending the freeze on student loan payments through January 2022, seniors will still be on the hook for cosigning their child or grandchild's student loan debt when those payments resume. We need to take action today to restore the strong protections to Social Security and other benefit programs.

We now realize what a profound effect the loss of these protections has had on retirees and individuals with disabilities, who often live on fixed incomes. More and more seniors and people with disabilities are having their Social Security and other lifeline benefits taken away to pay Federal debts. For example, according to recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Fiscal Service, over 167,000 Americans had their benefits garnished for student loan debt. While 167,000 seems small compared to a nation of over 320 million, those 167,000 had nearly $200 million garnished from their earned benefits. This is just the tip of the iceberg as more Americans start receiving benefits. Between 2008 and 2018, the number of individuals whose Social Security benefits were offset to pay student loans debt increased by 133 percent, from about 72,000 to 169,000. Over that same period, the amount collected from Social Security benefits ballooned from almost $63 million to nearly $200 million, a 217-percent increase.

Social Security plays a critical role in keeping seniors and people with disabilities out of poverty. In Oregon alone, Social Security cuts the poverty rate of the elderly from about 35 percent to 5 percent. However, despite Social Security's critical role in the safety net, close to 1 out of every 10 seniors over age 65 and 1 in 5 disabled workers still live in poverty and that is simply unacceptable.

I, along with Senators BROWN, WHITEHOUSE, LEAHY, WARREN, HIRONO. SANDERS, PADILLA, VAN HOLLEN, and MURRAY am reintroducing the Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act. The bill would restore the strong protections in the law that prevented the government from taking away earned benefits to pay Federal debts, and guarantee beneficiaries will be able to maintain a basic standard of living by receiving the benefits they have earned. The bill is supported by the Strengthen Social Security Coalition, Social Security Works, National Association of Disability Representatives, AFL-CIO, the American Federation of Government Employees, National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives, Justice in Aging, American Federation of Teachers, Alliance for Retired Americans, and the National Committee to Preserve Social Security & Medicare.

I ask unanimous consent that the bill be printed in the RECORD following this statement.

S. 3177

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 ''Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act''.

SEC. 2. PROTECTING SOCIAL SECURITY, RAILROAD RETIREMENT, AND BLACK LUNG BENEFITS FROM ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET.

(a) PROHIBITION ON ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET AUTHORITY.—

(1) ASSIGNMENT UNDER SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.—Section 207 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 407) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d) Subparagraphs (A), (C), and (D) of section 3716(c)(3) of title 31, United States Code, as such subparagraphs were in effect on the date before the date of enactment of the Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act, shall be null and void and of no effect.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) Section 14(a) of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 (45 U.S.C. 231m(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following: ''. The provisions of section 207(d) of the Social Security Act shall apply with respect to this title to the same extent as they apply in the case of title II of such Act.''.

(B) Section 2(e) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (45 U.S.C. 352(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following: ''The provisions of section 207(d) of the Social Security Act shall apply with respect to this title to the same extent as they apply in the case of title II of such Act.''

(b) REPEAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (3) of section 3716(c) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking ''(3)(A)(i) Notwithstanding'' and all that follows through ''any overpayment under such program).'';

(B) by striking subparagraphs (C) and (D); and

(C) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as paragraph (3).

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (5) of such section is amended by striking ''the Commissioner of Social Security and''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to any collection by administrative offset occurring on or after the date of enactment of this Act of a claim arising before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act.

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

S. 3178. A bill to express the sense of Congress on interoperability with Taiwan; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. CORNYN, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have my bill printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The bill expresses the sense of Congress on interoperability with Taiwan.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 3178

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON INTEROPERABILITY WITH TAIWAN.

It is the sense of Congress that, consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act (Public Law 96–8; 22 U.S.C. 3301 et seq.) and the Six Assurances, the United States should seek to support the goals of—

(1) improving asymmetric defense capabilities of Taiwan;

(2) bolstering deterrence to preserve peace, security, and stability across the Taiwan Strait; and

(3) deepening interoperability with Taiwan in defense capabilities, including in—

(A) maritime and air domain awareness; and

(B) integrated air and missile defense systems.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN: