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## Senate Update – March 3, 2008

### Last Week in the Senate

On Monday, February 25, 2008, the Senate resumed consideration of the Indian Health Care Act Amendments of 2007 (S. 1200). The Senate adopted four amendments to S. 1200 on Monday and Tuesday:

- Senator Byron Dorgan (D-SD), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, offered an amendment in the nature of a substitute that addressed some of the Administration's concerns. The cloture motion to proceed to consideration of the substitute amendment was agreed to by a vote of 85 to 2. ([Record Vote 28](#))
- Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) introduced an amendment that stipulated funds authorized by this act from being used for programs aimed at reducing gun ownership. This amendment was adopted by a vote of 78 to 11. ([Record Vote 29](#))
- Senator David Vitter (R-LA) offered an amendment that would restrict the use of funds authorized in this legislation from being used for abortions except in the case of rape or incest. The amendment was agreed to by a vote of 52 to 42. ([Record Vote 30](#))
- Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR) offered an amendment that would allow the Indian Health Service with the authority to use an area distribution fund to allocate health care facility construction funds to all 12 Indian Health Service areas to improve, expand, or replace existing health care facilities. ([Record Vote 31](#))

On Tuesday, the Senate passed S. 1200 by a vote of 83 to 10. ([Record Vote 32](#)) S. 1200 has been referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources, as well as the Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce.

*\*Note: Representative Frank Pallone (D-NJ) introduced the Indian Health Care Act Amendments of 2007 (H.R. 1328) on March 6, 2007. The bill was reported as amended from the Committee on Natural Resources on April 25, 2007, and has yet to receive full Committee consideration from Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce.*

Following the passage of S. 1200, Majority Leader Harry Reid brought forth a cloture motion to proceed to debate on a bill to provide for the safe redeployment of the United States troops from Iraq (S. 2633) which is sponsored by Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI). ([Record Vote 33](#))

In a move that surprised Senate Democrats, Senate Republicans joined the anti-war Democrats in supporting the motion to invoke cloture on the bill. By passing the motion with a vote of 70 to 24, Republicans allowed 30-hours of debate on the Iraq war strategy to proceed and used the opportunity to highlight progress being made in Iraq.

According to Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, "this bill does give us an opportunity — an opportunity to step back and highlight the remarkable progress that has been made in Iraq since the first time our friends proposed cutting off funds last May. It gives us a chance to highlight why we were wise to reject it even when the outcome in Iraq was unclear — much less when progress is being made."

Reid pulled S. 2633 from the floor on Wednesday.

Following S. 2633 being pulled, the Senate voted to invoke cloture by a vote of 89 to 3 on another Feingold measure that would require the Secretaries of Defense, Homeland Security, and State to submit a report to Congress setting forth the global strategy of the United States to combat and defeat al Qaeda and its affiliates (S. 2634). ([Record Vote 34](#))

Reid pulled S. 2634 from the floor on Thursday.

The Senate then brought up the New Direction for Energy Independence, National Security, and Consumer Protection Act and the Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act of 2007 (H.R. 3221) for a cloture vote. The Senate is using H.R. 3221 as the vehicle for the Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008 (S. 2636) because the Senate bill contains tax provisions.

*\*Note: Article I, Section 7, clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution provides that "All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives."*

However, the Senate rejected the cloture motion to proceed to debate on H.R. 3221 by a vote of 48 to 46. ([Record Vote 35](#))

### **This Week in the Senate**

The Senate will be in session Monday, March 3, 2008, and will begin consideration of a bill to reform the Consumer Product Safety Commission to provide greater protection for children's products, to improve the screening of noncompliant consumer products, to improve the effectiveness of consumer product recall programs (S. 2663).

Following the consideration of S. 2663, the Senate could revisit the Foreclosure Prevention Act (S. 2636).

### **Key Hearings**

The Senate Committee on Appropriations is holding a series of subcommittee hearings for fiscal year 2009 appropriations bills.

Wednesday, March 5, 2008, the Senate Committee on the Judiciary will hold an FBI oversight hearing with FBI Director Robert Mueller as a witness.