HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in a few hours, the Senate will vote for a third time on whether to end debate on human trafficking. The result will be the same the third time as it was the second time and the first time, which indicates to me that this week was a waste of time.

I indicated that the vote will fail, and it will fail because the debate is such that this is an important issue. We are determined to fix this bill, and we will fix it by removing the unrelated abortion provision from the pages of this legislation. I hope we can do that soon.

My friend the majority leader referenced reports that Democratic staffers should have—it should not have been plural—a Democratic staff member knew about the abortion provision prior to the legislation coming to the floor. Perhaps that is true, but I don't really know how the abortion language got in the bill for sure. I think I know. But it got in the bill. I think I know who put it in there, but it really doesn't matter. The fact of the matter is it is in the bill, and I am more concerned about getting the bill out.

We have had some columnists make fun about the fact that we should have read the bill more closely. I will not go into a lot of detail, but page 4 of the original bill—the section to which a lot of people love to point—was eliminated. If you look at it, it is crossed out.

If you go to page 50 or 51, it is stuck back in that part of the bill, and this is where the controversy gets pretty interesting. A Republican Senator who was responsible for this bill in the committee sent out a notice to all Senators, including Democrats, saying that we made some changes in the bill that passed last year—one, two, three, four, five, six changes that were made. The problem is he didn't indicate that they put the abortion language back in. It was really misleading, as was indicated on the floor yesterday by Senator FEINSTEIN.

We can go into why the language is in the bill. I have indicated I think I know who put it in and why they put it in. But they did put it in the bill. It is in the bill. We can have all of these accusations about paper trails and why it is in the bill, but it is in the bill, and it needs to come out.

Remember, Speaker BOEHNER, who has good qualifications for being the protector of abortion rights, as seen by the Republicans, was able to pass a version of this legislation without the abortion language. No one can question BOEHNER's qualifications for being anti-abortion. If they passed it in the House, why can't we do the same thing here?

Were the House Republicans wrong to pass the bill? I don't think so.

So before we embark upon a third iteration of the vote today, which is going to fail, I ask the Republican leadership: Are you interested in working toward a solution on this human trafficking legislation? If so, take this language out.

My friend the Republican leader was talking about leftwing lobbyists. The leftwing lobbyists are women, who—as indicated on the floor yesterday by Senator FEINSTEIN—are concerned about protecting their bodies and reproductive rights. They are interested in protecting themselves, as they should be, and they are protecting women all over America.

So are they only interested in scoring political points by forcing these show votes or are they interested in reaching a solution? If they are interested in a solution, we are willing to work with them, but the abortion language is going to come out of this legislation.

For the first time in the history of our country, we are now focused on not doing what has been done with the Hyde amendment for 30 years, and that is making sure there are no government taxpayer dollars spent for performing abortions. Now they have moved beyond that to private funding. It is wrong and we are not going to go there.

Would the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 178, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 178) to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Pending:

Portman amendment No. 270, to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to enable State child protective services systems to improve the identification and assessment of child victims of sex trafficking.

Portman amendment No. 271, to amend the definition of ''homeless person'' under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to include certain homeless children and youth.

Vitter amendment No. 284 (to amendment No. 271), to amend section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify those classes of individuals born in the United States who are nationals and citizens of the United States at birth.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12 noon will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to address a very serious accusation leveled yesterday against Republican Members of this body by the Democratic whip, the Senator from Illinois. I do so with some regret. The Senator from Illinois and I have been friends for many years. We served in the House together and here in this body, and we have worked together. That is why I was so surprised and disappointed in the comments he made yesterday on the floor of the Senate—comments that are totally inappropriate to be made on the floor of the Senate.

My colleague from Illinois said:

The Republican majority leader announced . . . that he was going to hold this nomination of Loretta Lynch until the bill which is pending before the Senate passes, whenever that may be.

Then he went on to say:

So Loretta Lynch, the first African-American woman nominated to be Attorney General, is asked to sit in the back of the bus when it comes to the Senate calendar. That is unfair. It is unjust. It is beneath the decorum and dignity of the U.S. Senate.

What is beneath the decorum and dignity of the U.S. Senate, I would say to the Senator from Illinois, is for him to come to this floor and use that imagery and suggest that racist tactics are being employed to delay Ms. Lynch's confirmation vote. Such inflammatory rhetoric has no place in this body and serves no purpose other than to further divide us.

Perhaps my colleagues, and the Senator from Illinois in particular, need to be reminded of their own record when it comes to the treatment of African-American women whose nominations were before this body. In 2003, Janice Rogers Brown—an African American—was nominated to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia—a court that had never included an African-American woman judge. The Senator from Illinois voted to filibuster her nomination in 2003 and again in 2005. When she was finally confirmed, after waiting 684 days, the Senator from Illinois voted against the historic nomination. I would never suggest—even with veiled rhetoric—that Judge Rogers Brown's race was the reason for the opposition to her nomination by the Senator from Illinois. And he should extend, I say to my colleague from Illinois, that same courtesy to me and my colleagues.

I would also like to remind the Senator from Illinois about how we were able to fill vacancies in the U.S. District Court of Arizona last year—effectively alleviating a judicial emergency. With tremendous bipartisan support of the nomination of Senator FLAKE and myself, we confirmed a diverse and historic slate of six nominees which included an Hispanic, an African American, and the first Native American woman ever to serve on the Federal bench. But their race had nothing to do with their successful confirmations, just as the race of Ms. Lynch should have no impact on her consideration in this body. Those six judges were approved by this body because each of

them had shown a commitment to justice, public service, and the people of Arizona. Each had also demonstrated the judicial temperament and the professional demeanor necessary to serve with integrity.

I further point out to the Senator from Illinois that at no time has the majority leader ever indicated that he would not bring the Lynch nomination to the floor; in fact, the opposite is true. We have made it very clear time and again that we will consider the Lynch nomination once we have disposed of the bipartisan trafficking bill. Had the Senator from Illinois and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle not filibustered this bill over a manufactured crisis, we could have considered the Lynch nomination this week. They chose otherwise.

I deeply regret that the Senator from Illinois chose to come to the floor yesterday and question the integrity and motivation of myself and my Republican colleagues. It was offensive and unnecessary. I think he owes this body, Ms. Lynch, and all Americans, an apology.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am glad I heard the comments of my colleague firsthand and I wish to respond to them directly.

As of today, Loretta Lynch, who is the President's nominee for Attorney General, has had her nomination pending before the U.S. Senate for 131 days. How does that compare to previous nominees for Attorney General? It is three times longer than the period of time that Attorney General Ashcroft was pending before the U.S. Senate, 2½ times longer than the time taken to confirm Attorney General Mukasey, and twice as long as the time taken to confirm Attorney General Holder.

Why? In some cases, these nominees had questions that were raised by Members of the Senate—questions about their political views, their background; legitimate questions requiring time to answer.

I sat in the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing for this nominee, Loretta Lynch. There were no questions raised of any nature, of any kind, questioning her ability to serve as Attorney General. None.

When my colleague from Arizona notes the fact that I have voted against African-American women nominees in the past, it is true. I am not arguing that every Member of the Senate should vote for Loretta Lynch simply because she would be the first African-American woman to serve in that capacity. All I am saying is she deserves the same fair treatment we have given to other nominees for this job.

She has now been pending before the Senate longer than any nominee for Attorney General in the last 30 years. She has been on the calendar now—on the calendar waiting for a vote—for a longer period of time than the last five nominees for Attorney General combined. Why? It has nothing to do with her qualifications for the job, which are the very best.

Why in the world are we taking this important post—Attorney General of the United States of America—why are we taking this important civil rights moment, when the first African-American woman in history is being given an opportunity to serve, and entangling it in the politics of the Senate?

A week ago, the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, said right outside this Chamber he was going to call her nomination this week. We breathed a sigh of relief; she has been waiting so long. Then, over the last weekend, he announced she wouldn't be called until a bill pending on the floor is passed.

Yes, I am upset and frustrated on her behalf to think that she is being treated in this manner. I am not going to use any pejorative terms other than to say I believe it is insensitive for the Senate to hold her up for such a lengthy period of time with no objection to this woman's character, fitness, and ability to continue to serve the United States.

She has served. She is currently in a position as a U.S. attorney in New York. She has the support of the following organizations: the National District Attorneys Association, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, the FBI Agents Association, and a long list of Republican- and Democratic-appointed former U.S. attorneys, including Patrick Fitzgerald and Scott Lassar from the Northern District of Illinois. She has the support of former FBI Director Louis Freeh and former Deputy Attorney General Larry Thompson from the George W. Bush administration.

Under ordinary circumstances, this would have been an easy ask for the President to bring a person of this quality to the Senate for confirmation. She had three votes supporting her on the Judiciary Committee from the Republican side. I don't understand the objections of the others, but I respect whatever their reasoning.

All I am asking for—all the President is asking for and all the Senate is asking for—is a vote. Bring her off the pages of the calendar, before the Senate, for a vote. Don't make it contingent on some bill or some political agreement in the future. Let this woman, who has led such an extraordinary life, have her chance to continue to serve the United States of America. That, to me, is only fair and only just and would be in keeping with the traditions of the Senate to follow.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time during the quorum call be divided equally between both sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we find ourselves in the unusual posture of being stuck on a piece of legislation that had 12 Democratic cosponsors and was supported unanimously by all Republicans and all Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee, and which uncharacteristically was brought to the floor without having to jump through the regular procedural hoops that legislation usually has to jump through that requires consent by all 100 Senators.

So when you think about combating human trafficking and particularly the targeting of 12- and 14-year-old girls who are of the typical ages and gender of the people who are victims of human trafficking, you would think that if there is anything that ought to be able to avoid the partisan wars here in Washington, DC, and the divisions that seem to separate us, it ought to be the subject of human trafficking. Well, I guess to say I was disappointed is an understatement. But I am determined to keep our focus on the victims of human trafficking, the people this would help rescue and help heal and get on with their lives. Yes, I am also determined to make sure we can demonstrate that we can function, something I thought Senators wanted to do.

After this last election there were a number of people who said: Gee, we would really like to change the Senate to restore its reputation as the world's greatest deliberative body, where we actually treasured and valued solutions more than we did scoring partisan political points.

I come here today in the spirit of trying to offer a solution that will help us get unstuck from where we have found ourselves. I see my friend, the Senator from Maine, who has been working tirelessly to try to help us get unstuck, and perhaps this will help.

Just to recap: The way this bill was structured is it would deal with the demand side of human trafficking; in other words, it would take the fines and penalties from the people who purchased these services and it would create a crime victims compensation fund, which in essence would be used to help provide the money to faith-based and other organizations that help rescue and help heal these victims of human trafficking. Then we heard from some of our colleagues on the other side that they wanted to change the way this was structured so that it was subject to the routine appropriations process and didn't enlarge the way the traditional limitations on appropriations were treated under the so-called Hyde amendment.

Just to refresh everybody's memory: Since 1976, all funding, all appropriations bills, and many authorization bills, including the Affordable Care Act and the Defense authorization bills, have been subjected to a limitation on the use of tax dollars for abortions except in the case of rape and in the cases where a physician certifies the health of the mother is at stake. The bill we introduced that was passed out of the Judiciary Committee unanimously and has 12 Democratic cosponsors has a reference to an appropriations bill that had that same limitation. The idea was that we wouldn't try to change the status quo; we would try to maintain the status quo which has existed for 39 years. But then some of our colleagues on the other side said, when offered an opportunity to vote on an amendment stripping that language out, they would not even vote. They wanted to obstruct and filibuster this legislation instead.

I, for one, am more interested in getting to a solution than I am engaging in this partisan point scoring. I believe there is a sufficient number of Members of the Senate who are sick and tired of the dysfunction and who don't want to be distracted by the politics but want to focus on how to help those 100,000 victims of human sex trafficking who are estimated to exist on an annual basis.

What I have come to the floor to do is to say let's make this fund subject to the annual appropriations process that will preserve the money for the victims and it cannot be used for any other purpose, but it will be subject to the Appropriations Committee and the usual riders that have existed for 39 years. It won't represent an expansion of the Hyde amendment, as some of our colleagues have expressed concerns about. It would, basically, again, maintain the status quo.

I came to the floor yesterday and my friend, the Senator from California, was here. I pointed out that not only did she cosponsor this legislation, she voted for it in the Judiciary Committee. But she now feels so strongly—and I know it is a matter of good faith and true conviction for her, but she feels like this is the place where we ought to fight this fight—we ought to relitigate the scope of the Hyde amendment. I don't think we have to do that. I am proudly pro-life and I believe the Hyde amendment represents one little island of consensus in the wars over abortion that we have. That is why for 39 years we have had a limitation on tax dollars. Indeed, fines paid into this fund would be public dollars. It wouldn't be generated from revenue, but it is not private money; once they are paid into this fund they are public dollars under my proposal, subject to appropriation on an annual basis by the Appropriations Committee. So now the money will flow from the victims fund through the relevant appropriations bills. It will be preserved for the victims and cannot be used for any other purpose, and all spending limitations that have routinely applied to those bills would apply to these funds as well.

So the question is, Can our friends who have been obstructing and filibustering this legislation take yes for an answer? Can they take yes for an answer? I think this will also be very revealing, because we will find out whether people are actually interested in a solution or are they trying to shut down the Senate and prevent us from functioning on anything. As I said before, if we can't get the yes on an antitrafficking bill, Heaven help us on issues where there is not consensus, where there are genuine policy differences.

I believe we can do exactly, for example, what Senator LEAHY, the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, asked for on the floor on March 10. He said ''but let's have it on things it should be on—appropriations bills.'' So I would say yes, my proposal would give what Senator LEAHY asked for.

Then the minority whip, Senator DURBIN, the Senator from Illinois, said on March 16:

> Henry Hyde authored the Hyde amendment that said no Federal funds should be used to pay for abortion procedures except in very limited circumstances: rape, incest, and life of the mother. That has been put in appropriations bills every year since—without question, without challenge.

That was stated by the minority whip, Senator DURBIN from Illinois. My proposal would facilitate exactly what he is arguing for. Can he say yes, take yes for an answer?

The minority leader, Senator REID, said on the 11th: I served in the House of Representatives with Henry Hyde; a very fine man. He has had his name affixed to an anti-abortion bill, anti-abortion legislation for almost three decades. And it's been continued year after year in appropriations bills.

That was spoken by Senator REID, the Democratic leader.

As I pointed out, what has perplexed me so much about all of this is that our Democratic friends have routinely voted for appropriations bills that contain the same restriction. When it was said, well, now you are extending it to an authorization bill, I pointed out that they voted for this very similar restriction in the Affordable Care Act and the Defense authorization bill, so that argument doesn't hold water; but I am giving them a chance to say yes, and, in essence, trying to find a way to break this impasse that has existed now for the last couple of weeks.

So that is the question. Now that we have made a proposal to them to give them what they have asked for and still preserve the 39-year limitation on the use of public dollars for abortion, can they take yes for an answer? I can't wait to hear what their response is to that proposal.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, let me first commend the senior Senator from Texas for his efforts to work out a compromise that I hope will allow this bill to go forward. Senator HEITKAMP and I also have been working with the senior Senator from Texas to try to come up with a solution that is similar to what he has outlined, and we will have more to say about that after the vote.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to proceed as in morning business for the purpose of a bill introduction, unless someone else is seeking the floor to speak on this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. President.

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 804 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished senior Senator from Maine, my neighbor in New England.

We actually still have some debates on this floor. We had an important one yesterday. Someone called it a ''C–SPAN moment.'' It was a focused and memorable discussion of a significant issue now before the Senate. It was an honest discussion about what is at stake in the debate we are having right now. The core question is how we are going to support the survivors, in what every Senator agrees is a heinous and deplorable crime.

Late yesterday, Senator FEINSTEIN spoke with powerful clarity about why the Hyde amendment has no place in what we are trying to do here, particularly when this legislation we are debating does not involve taxpayer funds. The Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund included in S. 178 is funded by a special assessment fine collected from convicted sex traffickers. It is intended to help survivors rebuild their lives.

Now, whether taxpayer dollars should be used to ensure the full range of health care options available to this very vulnerable population is an important debate. We will have that another day. But the application of the Hyde amendment when zero taxpayer dollars are involved is unprecedented. It represents a very significant change in Federal policy.

When asked why the Hyde amendment has resulted in such an outcry, Senator FEINSTEIN said simply but powerfully:

> Because of what this legislation is. This legislation is about the raping . . . of young girls.

Senator FEINSTEIN is right. I encourage everyone to go back and watch her moving remarks that got right to the heart of this debate.

These are children who have been bought and sold like animals. They have had every choice taken away from

them. Now, if they survive, if they escape, we should not put limits on what health services they can seek. I stand with the survivors of these crimes. I stand with Senator FEINSTEIN.

This is a line we should not cross. Human trafficking victims are often not treated as rape victims. Too often these young girls are treated as prostitutes, even though they had no choice in it. That is a fact we are trying to change, but we cannot ignore the reality that many of these girls are put through our juvenile justice system and prosecuted as criminals, rather than treated as victims.

It is easy for some to claim that there is a so-called ''rape exception'' to the Hyde restriction but the reality is that for the survivors of this terrible crime, the rape exception feels more like an overwhelming bureaucracy. In many States, victims are forced to jump through hoop after hoop to qualify for the exception. They have to obtain police reports or certifications from State agencies. They have to relive the details of their trauma again and again. One State even requires the Governor to approve any exception. Another State refuses to recognize the rape exception at all.

The easiest, most appropriate solution here is to simply remove the Hyde restriction so that survivors can make their own health care decisions. That is what the survivors are asking us to do. That is what the professionals who work with human trafficking survivors are asking us to do.

Yesterday, my friend, the senior Senator from Texas, argued that the inclusion of the language was routine, that this does not change the status quo at all. Well that is simply not accurate. The Hyde amendment is about keeping taxpayer dollars out of the abortion debate. We may have different opinions on the issue, but that is not what we are talking about here.

The money at issue in this bill is not taxpayer dollars, it is money collected from sex traffickers. The bottom line is that the offender-financed fund created in this bill relies on zero taxpayer dollars.

So if you want to maintain current practice, you have to remove this provision. The House bill, that passed unanimously almost 2 months ago, does not contain this expansion of the Hyde amendment's reach. It does not apply the Hyde amendment to nontaxpayer dollars. If Speaker BOEHNER could find a way to bring the House together and pass this bill without injecting abortion politics into the discussion, then why can't we do that in the Senate?

Senator FEINSTEIN is right. We have amendments we need to consider if we can simply get past this stalemate, but she is also right that the issue at stake is too important to turn our back on. This is not a provision we can just ignore and dismiss as the status quo. But I believe, as Senator FEINSTEIN and others have said, we can find a path forward. The path forward should not be one that expands restrictions on the health care choices of human trafficking survivors.

These survivors—many are 12 or 13 years old—let's not put further hurdles in front of them. Let's not push for a political agenda on either side. The Hyde amendment will appear on taxpayer-funded matters, as it usually does. That is one thing the Appropriations Committee will face. We are not talking about taxpayer dollars here. We are not talking about taxpayer dollars.

This would be like reaching into a State and saying: Oh, by the way, you have people who have raised money for a particular organization, not taxpayer dollars, but we in Congress are going to restrict what you can use that money for. Well, we do not do that. The reason we do not do it is because our involvement is with taxpayer dollars. If we want to go and appropriate money in this area, that is the time to bring up the issue.

The Appropriations Committee—I have served on that Committee for almost 40 years—we handle that issue there, but not here.

What is the pending parliamentary situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is on consideration of S. 178, with the time until 12 noon equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. LEAHY. Is there a vote scheduled?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. At 12 noon.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to yield back all time and ask unanimous consent that the vote begin now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the committee-reported substitute amendment to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, James Lankford, David Vitter, Richard Burr, Chuck Grassley, Joni Ernst, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, James E. Risch, Daniel Coats, James M. Inhofe, Shelley Moore Capito, Mark Kirk, Cory Gardner, Thom Tillis.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the committee-reported substitute amendment to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted ''yea.''

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 75 Leg.]

YEAS—56

Ayotte	Ernst	Murkowski
Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blunt	Flake	Perdue
Boozman	Gardner	Portman
Burr	Graham	Risch
Capito	Grassley	Roberts
Casey	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heitkamp	Rubio
Coats	Heller	Sasse
Cochran	Hoeven	Scott
Collins	Inhofe	Sessions
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Sullivan
Cotton	Kirk	Thune
Crapo	Lankford	Tillis
Cruz	Lee	Toomey
Daines	Manchin	Vitter
Donnelly	McCain	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	

NAYS—42

Baldwin	Hirono	Peters
Bennet	Kaine	Reed
Blumenthal	King	Reid
Booker	Klobuchar	Sanders
Brown	Leahy	Schatz
Cantwell	Markey	Schumer
Cardin	McCaskill	Shaheen
Carper	McConnell	Stabenow
Coons	Menendez	Tester
Durbin	Merkley	Udall
Feinstein	Mikulski	Warner
Franken	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Nelson	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Alexander	Boxer

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 56, the nays are 42.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I enter a motion to reconsider the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, James Lankford, David Vitter, Richard Burr, Chuck Grassley, Joni Ernst, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, James E. Risch, Daniel Coats, James M. Inhofe, Shelley Moore Capito, Mark Kirk, Cory Gardner, Thom Tillis.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted ''yea.''

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 76 Leg.]

YEAS—56

Ayotte	Ernst	Murkowski
Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blunt	Flake	Perdue
Boozman	Gardner	Portman
Burr	Graham	Risch
Capito	Grassley	Roberts
Casey	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heitkamp	Rubio
Coats	Heller	Sasse
Cochran	Hoeven	Scott
Collins	Inhofe	Sessions
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Sullivan
Cotton	Kirk	Thune
Crapo	Lankford	Tillis
Cruz	Lee	Toomey
Daines	Manchin	Vitter
Donnelly	McCain	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	

NAYS—42

Baldwin	Hirono	Peters
Bennet	Kaine	Reed
Blumenthal	King	Reid
Booker	Klobuchar	Sanders
Brown	Leahy	Schatz
Cantwell	Markey	Schumer
Cardin	McCaskill	Shaheen
Carper	McConnell	Stabenow
Coons	Menendez	Tester
Durbin	Merkley	Udall
Feinstein	Mikulski	Warner
Franken	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Nelson	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Alexander	Boxer

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 56, the nays are 42.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I enter a motion to reconsider the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I wish to speak about the bill that I would have thought a few days ago would have passed by now—the bill before the Senate and the bill that addresses this topic of modern-day slavery. This bill came out of the Judiciary Committee in a unanimous fashion before it came to the Senate floor. Then, there was no dissent; we agreed we should get right to the bill and pass it.

I am pleased to cosponsor the Victims for Justice of Trafficking Act, which includes sexual trafficking and labor trafficking. This bill would help innocent victims of trafficking by creating grants for State and local governments to develop comprehensive systems to address these problems in every State, we are told, and certainly in almost every city—if not every city—where this is a problem.

This bill allows law enforcement to deal with the problem by giving them the tools they need to hold the people accountable who are forcing these violent crimes and violent living conditions and the abuse of people's dignity in so many ways on others. Apparently, approximately 100,000 American children each year are victims of commercial sex and child prostitution and child trafficking, according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. It is like so many numbers that we think of. I would encourage everybody to think of any city they can think of that has 100,000 people. Most of us would see that as a big community and a lot of people—100,000 children every year—100,000 children every year, not every decade or every century—every year, in the United States of America, not all over the world.

I would guess most Americans would assume if this is a problem, it has to be a bigger problem in any other country, but 100,000 children here among us are victims of this tragedy.

The Justice Department says there are more human trafficking cases prosecuted by Federal attorneys in Missouri's Western District, the district where the U.S. Attorney's office is in Kansas City, MO, than anywhere else in the country. I hope that means the people in the Western District of Missouri who run that office are doing an extraordinary job, but I think it would be foolish for me to think that this isn't also an extraordinary problem. My house in Springfield, MO, is in that district, as are Springfield, Joplin, and Kansas City. These are places one wouldn't think, what is the No. 1 prostitution area for victims of human trafficking in the country? The Western District of Missouri.

St. Louis, MO, is also one of the top 20 cities, we are told, for human trafficking, according to the Department of Justice. These are bad statistics, as every single statistic any of us could look at in our State could be. Of course, one case of human trafficking is one case too many, but we are not, unfortunately, just talking about one case; we are talking about lots of cases.

Earlier this month the FBI arrested a person in my State who was charged with transporting a minor across State lines with the intent to engage in prostitution. The FBI reported the man involved was physically abusive, verbally abusive, emotionally abusive, and sexually abusive to this young person he was using for himself and offering to others. This modern-day slavery should not be allowed to continue.

The bill that is before the Senate right now, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, has been endorsed by 200 different advocacy groups, including the NAACP, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Exodus Cry, a Grandview, MO, group, Rights4Girls, the National Association to Protect Children, the Fraternal Order of Police, and the National Conference of State Legislatures. We can't vote on it here on the Senate floor? We can't get this bill on the President's desk? Why is that?

Why again today did the minority refuse to provide the votes we needed to get from where we are to 60? We did have a few Members from that side join us this week, but we are still short.

Let's deal with this problem. They say it is because there is a section of the bill that deals with the Hyde amendment. OK, the Hyde amendment has been around now for part of four decades. What does the Hyde amendment do? It bans taxpayer-provided abortions.

One of the things we have done in this country is to say because there is vast disagreement on this—we understand there is vast disagreement. Surely we are not going to take money from some taxpayers who are totally opposed to this and use it to pay for something they are totally opposed to. There is a provision in this bill. It was there when the bill was voted out of committee. It was there when everybody voted to move to the bill. Suddenly, it is a provision that nobody was aware of before. In fact, in committee, there was at least one amendment that amended the sentence right below this sentence. So are we not doing our job? Are we not reading these bills, or, are we just looking for a reason not to get anything done? Surely the Senate in the last half dozen years has proven to the country that the Senate can be dysfunctional. Surely we don't need to continue to make that case.

So let's get to work. Let's get down to business. Let's look at what needs to be done here. Let's see what we could do to set an example for the world. Frankly, there were colleagues who had amendments that could have been at least debated that would have talked about what could be done to carry this beyond our borders to deal with this modern-day slavery—whether for labor or for sex—in ways this issue should be dealt with.

I would love to see the President step forward and encourage the leaders of

his party to get together and get the votes needed to pass this. Let's move to a conclusion and put this on the President's desk. I think without the language that some people now suddenly find objectionable, this bill wouldn't pass the House. But the bill will pass the House as reported out of committee, if the Senate would pass it, and it would be on the President's desk. There is nothing new here.

I hope we get this done. I think people are ready to see the Senate work. Let's get this done.

Let's get on with a budget for the first time in 7 years, if we could join with the House of Representatives and say, OK, let's present a plan to the country of how we are going to get back to a balanced budget and what our priorities are.

But one of our priorities should be to end the nightmare for victims of human trafficking, and we can't do that unless we face reality and get on this bill.

LETTER ON IRAN NEGOTIATIONS

Also, Madam President, while I am here, I want to talk a little bit about the letter I signed along with Senator COTTON and 45 others a few days ago. I thought the interesting thing about that letter is that the letter was essentially addressed to the Foreign Minister of Iran but released to every newspaper in America. In many ways it was an idea that is important that the American people understand.

I am sure the Iranian Foreign Minister, by the way, already understood it. If one had any interest in reading the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD or watching C–SPAN or reading any newspaper in the last 6 months, you would have seen that the Senate was very concerned in a bipartisan way that the President was negotiating an agreement with another country and was refusing to come to the Senate and ask for the approval that the Constitution anticipates should be there.

I was surprised by the Iranian Foreign Minister's response, which was: Well, really, when you are dealing with this kind of situation, it is international laws that prevail. The laws of any individual country don't matter. Well, we all take an oath when we are sworn in to the Senate that the law and the Constitution of the United States do matter and it is our job to uphold and defend the law and the Constitution of the United States. There was nothing I saw that suggested the Iranian Foreign Minister or anybody else should interpret that for me. The Constitution is pretty clear, by the way, that there is an advise-and-consent responsibility. Frankly, advise means to talk to the Senate while you are negotiating.

I read somewhere the other day that, well, it is so presumptuous for the Senate to want to give advice to the President before he has negotiated an agreement. Well, the Constitution says that we are in a position to do that. The traditions of the country say if the President doesn't keep at least the right people in the Senate informed—the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, the minority senior person of that committee, the chairman of the defense committee, the Armed Services Committee—if they aren't kept informed, you are not going to bring people along as you should. That is obviously part of trying to make the government work.

No matter what the President thinks, the Senate is not just an inconvenience; the Congress is not just an inconvenience. There is a reason for these branches of government.

Actually, in another interesting response, the Secretary of State said: Well, obviously this agreement is not binding on anybody but the person who signs it. That is what I have been saying for about a year, but it was interesting that it took this letter for the Secretary of State to say that. This agreement really doesn't bind anybody. If the President signs this agreement, it is an agreement, not a treaty. What does that mean? It means if it is not a treaty, then the government of the United States hasn't agreed to it. Only the President of the United States has agreed to it. President after President have brought agreements about nuclear weapons to the Senate—the START treaty, all the treaties which were approved by the Senate. It would have been unthinkable just a few years ago that one would even think about committing our country to something that involves nuclear weapons potential and not involve the U.S. Senate.

So I think getting these issues on the table is a good thing. Frankly, I think a nuclear-weapons-capable Iran is the most destabilizing thing that could happen in the world today. Not only our great ally and friends in Israel, but countries all over the Middle East will immediately be concerned. Countries within reach of those potential future weapons in Europe and other places would soon be concerned. We are headed down a bad path here, negotiating not that Iran will never be allowed to have nuclear weapons but apparently negotiating how long it will be from the moment they start until they can have the enriched material it would take to have a nuclear weapon.

There are many countries in the world today that have nuclear power that don't enrich in a way that would allow them to ever have a nuclear weapon. Iran, if it wanted to, could have added itself easily to that list. Iran, one of the most energy-rich places in the world, could easily have added itself to that list, if it wanted to add to all that nuclear energy power. I think it is obvious the shadow that Iran would like to cast over the next decade in the region they are already dominating in a handful of capitals is a shadow of nuclear weapons capability. The United States should be very concerned, and this discussion at the highest levels is the right kind of discussion for the country to be having.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President and colleagues, in my professional life I always considered myself to be a numbers guy. As I have sat back and listened to the debate over these past 17 days since the Justice for Victims of Human Trafficking Act was reported out of the Judiciary Committee, I decided I would maybe try a different take on the numbers we should be concerned about.

As I said, it has been 17 days since the bill we are considering came out of the Judiciary Committee—56 days since the bill was first introduced on January 13th. Now, some of my colleagues on the other side have said that somehow between when the bill was introduced on January 13th and when it was reported out of Committee on March 10th, there was a provision placed in the bill that they were not made aware of. This is simply not the case. My colleagues had days to review this bill, but unfortunately, some of them are in the habit of passing something and then finding out later what they were actually voting for.

It has been 39 years since the Hyde language we are currently discussing was first passed into law. It was so long ago I was even young—16 years old. The Hyde language was first enacted in 1976, and since then, has become known, well-settled law. Obviously, this is not some sort of new concept. It is language that everybody who is in this body—and every staffer who has served somebody in this body—should know about.

Now, with the Hyde amendment being around for some four decades, I was trying to figure out: Well, maybe we are talking about Members who are familiar with the Hyde language, but never voted for it.

So I decided to go back to my numbers and take a look at the voting history of the Senators in this Chamber today, many of whom—all of whom, actually—on this graphic are now preventing this very important human trafficking legislation from moving forward.

The minority leader has voted in support of the Hyde amendment 14 times, and all these other Senators on my chart at least a dozen times, with the exception of Senator BOXER who has voted in support of the Hyde language 10 times. Senator BOXER stood on the floor last week and said it was offensive language. However, Senator BOXER has voted for this language 10 times, most recently this past December when they passed the fiscal year 2015 omnibus bill.

So one wonders what they are really trying to accomplish here. I hear them. My Democrat colleagues are very sympathetic to the content of the bill. I hear them say that human trafficking is horrible, and we need to do something about it. But their words do not fit their actions. Their words say we ought to move forward and end these horrible situations—and I will talk a little bit more about those numbers later—but their actions are just burning time in this body preventing us from moving on to the many other important things we need to address—such as our national security, our economic security, and our energy security. But no, we have spent 17 days on a bill that my colleagues in the Democratic caucus say we should act on, but are at the same time impeding the process.

Now, as confusing as these numbers are, as confusing as it is to hear so many Senators say that this language is offensive and needs to be taken out—despite the fact that they have regularly voted for it in the past—the very sad result of their actions are what we are not getting done, and that is getting the human trafficking bill passed so we can end the horrible conditions that are imposed on the many people who are enslaved on a daily basis.

I'm going to give my colleagues a couple of numbers to think about. The State Department and other agencies estimate that there are 600,000 to 800,000 people trafficked across global borders each year. That is about 1,600 to 2,200 boys, girls, men, and women being enslaved every single day in this world.

Now, in our country, it is estimated that 17,500 people are trafficked across our borders into the U.S. sex trade every year and that there are about 100,000 people already here.

Think about that in terms of the numbers. Every day that goes by, there are another 50 victims from overseas trafficked into the U.S. for sex trade—every single day another 50 people.

This week, we have had five votes on this bill. This means, another 250 young girls, young boys, women, and men will have been trafficked into our country for sex trade.

This is a good bill, and it works to stop the growth of human trafficking and free those who are currently enslaved.

Colleagues, I am a freshman. I have been here fewer than 70 days. When I read the human trafficking bill, I knew that the Hyde amendment was in it. Anybody who is doing their job in the Senate should have been able to figure that out.

So it raises a very interesting question—how could we come out of the Judiciary Committee, which I serve on, with a unanimous vote? As a matter of fact, there are 12 Democrat cosponsors of this bill. Certainly, those Members of the Democratic Caucus read the bill and their staffs had time to read the bill in the months that the language has been public.

So, colleagues, I wonder if it is really about the human trafficking bill and the language or if it is about a strategy just to slow the process down, but what I think is so sad is the human consequences of this inaction, and we need to move forward.

I just came from the Senate steps to take a picture with about 100 students from my great State of North Carolina.

While I had time before the photographer arrived to let them ask me few questions, I said: I am going to have to go to the Senate floor soon and speak. They said: What are you going to speak on?

I was really at a loss for words. I was wondering how I was going to tell them I am trying to help pass legislation that makes them safer, but we are having a petty fight in the Senate over process.

So I really ask Members of the Democratic caucus to look into their hearts and to understand the human tragedy this legislation is attempting to correct and join with us to pass this bill and move on to the many other things we need to do for this great Nation.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we have had a lot of discussion regarding the pending bill. I thought again I would emphasize what Senator FEINSTEIN said earlier, which was so good, and I hope people will listen to her words. I would just follow on to that to say my good friend—and he is my friend—the distinguished senior Senator from Texas has suggested that we make the funds collected from traffickers subject to the appropriations process to get around this impasse, but that does not solve the problem.

The pending legislation came out of the Senate Judiciary Committee, an authorizing committee that does not appropriate funds. We should be telling appropriators that we believe services to trafficking victims are important by authorizing funds. As the most senior member of that Appropriations Committee I can tell you that this is an important process that results in real money for victim services.

It is a process that works well. Under Democratic leadership of the Senate Appropriations Committee, total appropriations for trafficking victims' services more than doubled from $28.1 million in FY2014 to $58.1 million for FY2015.

Senator CORNYN's proposal to simply funnel fees collected from traffickers through the appropriations process still presents the same problem—this is not taxpayer money, and subjecting it to the Hyde amendment would expand the amendment's reach to an offender-financed fund meant for women and children who should have all options available to them when it comes to health services after being sexually exploited.

I would quote what the House Republican author of this bill, Congressman POE, said today:

> We passed a bill. The Senate should take it up and pass it.

That could be done immediately. I don't think there would be anybody trying to block it. The Republican House of Representatives passed this bill unanimously. We could take up and pass it, and not waste 2 weeks of having this dance on the floor, vote after vote, which both sides know isn't going anywhere. The easiest and best thing to do is to remove the Hyde restriction so survivors can make their own health care decisions.

I will not do it again today, but I put into the RECORD letters and statements from hundreds of people—survivors' organizations and the people they represent—and they have said: Let us make our own health care decisions.

Now, to argue what my friend from Texas says, that the inclusion of this language is routine and it does not change the status quo at all, is not accurate. In fact, that is probably why, I suspect, a majority of the Members of the House of Representatives—who support the Hyde amendment—did not include it in the House version of the bill. The Hyde amendment is about keeping taxpayer dollars out of the abortion debate. Now, we can have different opinions on the issue, but that is not what we are talking about here. The money at issue in this bill is collected from sex traffickers.

The bottom line is the offender-financed funds raised in this bill rely on zero taxpayer dollars. Maintaining the current practice, if that is what you want to do, means removing the provision. Maybe we ought to listen to some of the leadership on the Appropriations Committee and how they feel about this. They are not the ones asking to do this. The Appropriations Committee is not asking us to turn them into some kind of a superauthorizing committee, and we should not put them in that position.

I hope cooler heads will prevail and come together on this. I think it will be very easy for both sides who do want to stop sex trafficking to come together, and pass this bill.

Then, let us also take the steps to correct what has been a shameful position in the U.S. Senate and confirm Loretta Lynch as Attorney General. She has waited on the floor much longer than the four men who preceded her put together. This woman has waited longer than those four men before her put together, and yet everybody applauds her as a superb prosecutor. We talk about sex trafficking, and she is about the only person we have seen in here as a nominee who has actually prosecuted sex traffickers. Let's get on with the job.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I saw on television my friend from Vermont, the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, talking about the virtues of the House human trafficking bill, and I thought it would be worthwhile for Members and whoever else is listening to understand the difference between the two bills.

First of all, our bill, the one that is being filibustered by our Democratic colleagues—I should say, all but four of them—contains a $30 million fund that is financed through criminal funds. This is analogous to a crime victims compensation fund. For example, when I was attorney general of Texas, we administered one, and we were able to make grants to various organizations. That is what this $30 million fund would be. The bill on the House side actually has no fund. It is an authorization. It is a $5 million authorization. It has no money. It has no mechanism to generate funds like ours does.

Our bill contains language increasing restitution for trafficking victims by using criminal assets to satisfy these needs and allowing law enforcement to pay witness-assistance award money to victims.

The bill in the House does nothing. In other words, we have an asset-forfeiture provision in our bill to take the people who profit from human trafficking and to forfeit those funds and use that to add to the fines and use that money to help rescue and heal the victims. The House bill has nothing in it in that regard.

Our bill requires law enforcement agencies to file regular reports of human trafficking case totals as part of the Uniform Crime Reporting Program. That is important because so much of the human trafficking damage is never reported to law enforcement.

First of all, many victims of human trafficking are children who may or may not actually consider themselves victims. They may be runaways. They may find some adult who has taken them under their wing, only to turn them out on the streets as prostitutes and the like. They may not actually consider themselves victims, at least initially, which they are.

Our bill would make sure the statistics and reports of human trafficking totals are reported in the Uniform Crime Reporting Program so we would actually have a better objective record about the number of cases and so people could appreciate the severity of this problem. The bill in the House has nothing in that regard.

Next, our bill clarifies that child pornography producers are engaged in commercial sex acts. The bill on the House side does nothing in that regard.

Our bill requires persons indicted for human trafficking to be treated as violent criminals for purposes of pretrial, in terms of the availability of bail. The bill on the other side of the Capitol, in the House, does nothing in that regard. Our bill requires prosecutors and judges to undergo training to improve restitution in traffic cases. Again, our friends on the other side of the Capitol—their bill does nothing in that regard.

Finally, our bill requires human traffickers to remain under supervision for at least 5 years after they are released from prison. On the House side, it doesn't touch on that.

I don't say that to criticize the House bill, because I think they have done some good work. But it is important to recognize that the bill over here, which is being filibustered by our Democratic minority, does a lot more and a lot of different things, and things that I think are going to be a lot more helpful to the victims of human trafficking, which I can only imagine should be our collective goal.

I came to the floor this morning, and I said that we would be willing to work with our Democratic colleagues to try to address some of their stated concerns with the original bill. I said that notwithstanding the fact that 12 Democrats cosponsored the bill, the original bill that is now being filibustered. Nine Democrats, along with all of the Republicans on the Judiciary Committee, voted to pass the bill out of the Judiciary Committee. Literally all 100 Senators had to consent for the bill to come to the floor without going through the typical procedural hurdles with which we are all very familiar.

Imagine my surprise, when in the middle of last week, these objections came up. What was the nature of the objection? The objection was that this bill contained a reference to an appropriations bill that was passed in 2014 and for which all of our Democratic colleagues voted. But that reference was to a restriction on the use of taxpayer dollars to fund abortions, known as the Hyde amendment. Then after they saw that or after they claimed that this was something new and unbeknownst to them, they objected.

I just simply cannot accept this argument that a provision that colleagues on that side of the aisle have routinely voted for on appropriations bills, that they routinely voted for on Defense authorization bills, and one they voted for on the Affordable Care Act, restricting the use of taxpayer funds under these circumstances—why they would pick this vehicle to object to that very same provision.

I accept at face value that some of our colleagues said that this is something they perhaps should have read more closely but they failed to do. I personally find it a little hard to believe, given the nature of the professional staff we have here in the Senate, that Members did not know that this restriction, known as the Hyde amendment, was part of the underlying bill. But assuming that is the case, what we are now offering them is a middle ground—to say that instead of this fund being a separate pool of money outside of the appropriations process, we would agree that the Appropriations Committee would appropriate money out of this fund in the same manner as they do all appropriations, with the exception that the money would be specifically designated to help the victims of human trafficking and not be able to be used for any other purpose.

So the reports are—after we made this proposal trying to address some of the concerns on this side of the aisle—that they would not be happy unless we stripped out all reference to the Hyde amendment in the bill. That is unacceptable. That is unacceptable for the same reason that they would object to a change in the status quo by an expansion of the Hyde amendment. We have now brought the Hyde amendment back within the appropriations process where it has been for 39 years. But to say we are going to eliminate any reference to those restrictions, which have been the law of the land for 39 years, would be viewed as an erosion of the Hyde amendment—hardly a status quo.

I don't know how long this is going to take. I appreciate the perseverance and commitment of the majority leader who, as you know, determines what bills come to the floor and when and who says we are going to stay on this bill until it passes. We have had a number of votes, and four of our Democratic colleagues have joined us to get to a place where we could actually pass this legislation. We just need a handful more—two or three more—to help us.

I know that a number of Senators are going to be hearing from their constituents back in their States because 200 different organizations—law enforcement organizations and victims' rights organizations that are very concerned about this human trafficking plague—are going to be lighting up the phone lines, sending emails, and communicating with their elected officials—as they should.

There is no reason we cannot get to ''yes'' on this bill unless this whole debate is a phony debate, and what the leadership on the Democratic side is more concerned about is trying to make the Senate as dysfunctional in the 114th Congress as they did in the 113th Congress.

I suspect, unfortunately, because of the phony issues saying take out language we voted for time and again—yes, it was contained in a bill we cosponsored. Yes, it was contained in a bill we voted for already. Now we are going to come to the floor, and we are going to block it.

We know who pays for this political gamesmanship. Sadly, it is the very same victims whom our colleagues

here on the floor say they want to help—the children—the 100,000 children who are subjected to human trafficking each year. Other people who need our help and deserve our help are among the most vulnerable people we can possibly imagine.

All of us are mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers. We all understand this could happen to anybody's family. Why in the world would we want to indulge in this sort of gamesmanship and phony objections to provisions that have been voted for time and again by the same Members who now object to them on this legislation and say to these victims of human trafficking that we don't care and we are not going to help?

I don't believe for a minute that is why Members of the Senate come here. I know virtually all 100 Senators, and I believe that most Senators—if not all Senators—come here because they actually want to do something. They actually want to solve problems. They actually want to help people who need the help. I cannot think of anybody more deserving than the victims of human trafficking.

I see the distinguished Senator from Colorado here. I will yield for him momentarily.

I wanted to come to the floor and respond to the comments made by the distinguished Senator from Vermont, the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, that all we need to do is take up and pass the House bill. The House bill doesn't appropriate any money. It is an authorization bill. It authorizes $5 million in appropriations.

The great thing about our bill is it doesn't take any tax dollars. These are all fines and penalties and asset forfeitures from people engaged in the criminal enterprise, and this takes some of the profit out of this terrible crime.

It also does a number of other things, which I mentioned earlier. But the idea that we can somehow just take up and pass the House bill and avoid this bogus objection and somehow solve the problem, I think, just misses the point.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, through the Chair, I would like to thank the senior Senator from Texas for his courtesy in allowing me to speak this afternoon.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the nomination of Loretta Lynch to be our next Attorney General. It has been 131 days since President Obama nominated her for this position. By Monday, she will have waited longer on the Senate floor than the last seven Attorney General nominees combined.

When it comes to Ms. Lynch's nomination, it seems as if we are setting records—but for all of the wrong reasons. The irony of that is that she is probably one of the most qualified and least political Attorney General nominees that this Chamber has seen in decades.

She has spent a significant portion of her career as a Federal prosecutor in the Eastern District of New York, having twice served as the U.S. attorney. There she took on corrupt public officials and expanded the office's national security practice. She has also worked in private practice at one of the country's top law firms, where she specialized in commercial litigation, white-collar criminal defense, and corporate compliance.

In 2011, she was recognized as the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association Foundation honoree of the year. In 2014, she was honored as the recipient of the Women in Federal Law Enforcement Foundation President's Award. She has received support—no surprise—from all across the political spectrum.

Just this week, even former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani—hardly a great friend of the President—wrote that she was ''balanced, professional and a dedicated public servant.'' He went on to write that he can ''further attest that her skill set seems very appropriate to the tough tasks she would face as attorney general.''

The Major Cities Chiefs Association, which represents the 67 largest law enforcement agencies in the country, wrote this to the Senate: ''Ms. Lynch has overseen many important criminal prosecutions for terrorism, organized crime, corruption, drug and gang related cases. It is clear that her familiarity with the Department, managing a fast-paced and high profile office as well as her integrity and private sector legal experiences make her a qualified candidate.''

What are we waiting for?

Some 25 former U.S. attorneys who worked in both Democratic and Republican administrations wrote to this body saying: ''Ms. Lynch has the experience, temperament, independence, integrity, and judgment to immediately assume this critically important position.'' They should know. They should know. These are the folks with whom she has worked closely, and will continue to work as Attorney General. Both as a Federal prosecutor and in private practice, they have seen firsthand her character, intellect, and her integrity.

I myself once worked for the Deputy Attorney General of the United States at the Department of Justice. I know how close the collaboration is when things are working well between the Attorney General and the U.S. attorneys all throughout the United States of America, and it is something to see.

I know it has become fashionable around this place to continually criticize our Federal employees, but I recommend that our new colleagues, if they ever have the chance, go see the investiture of a new judge in their State, as I have had a chance to do in my State. When you see how the U.S. attorney's office, the Federal public defender's office, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the FBI, and the U.S. Marshals Service are all represented, you will say to yourself: Thank God I live in a country that is committed to the rule of law. Thank God I live in this country instead of most of the countries around the world where they don't even know what the rule of law is.

That is what we have in the United States, and the chief law enforcement officer of this country is our Attorney General.

Everybody who has looked at this nomination from the outside has said she would be an excellent Attorney General. So given all of that, it is awfully difficult to understand why she has had to wait so long just to receive a simple up-or-down vote. Has anyone challenged her qualifications? Come to the floor today and do it. Has anyone questioned her character or integrity? Of course not. Has she failed to provide necessary information to the Senate? It is my understanding that she testified for almost 8 hours and responded to about 900 questions for the record. Is her nomination delayed just to make political points on completely unrelated issues?

I have gotten to the point now that when people come to my office after they have been nominated to be a judge or have been nominated to do something in the Federal Government, the first words out of my mouth are not ''Congratulations'' anymore; the first words to come out of my mouth are ''Don't take it personally. Don't take this process personally.''

We are losing talented people who want to serve the United States of America in these important and in many cases nonpolitical jobs because the Senate cannot confirm them. It is because we tell somebody like Loretta Lynch: Sorry, it is going to be zillions of days before you have a chance to even serve this country.

It is not right. I am amazed at the capacity of people in this place to waste their own time, but we should not waste other people's time.

Unfortunately, the delay in confirming Ms. Lynch is having real-world consequences. Earlier this week, the former Deputy Attorney General expressed his concern that the protracted nomination process is adding unnecessary uncertainty to the Department of Justice. He highlighted the importance of having continuity in undertaking long-term investigations or in developing national security policy and how it is harder to facilitate continuity the longer Ms. Lynch's nomination is delayed.

As I said, this has become in many ways the new norm in our politics where these fights in Congress are having real-world consequences on the people we represent. It is incredibly counterproductive to the people we represent, whether it is shutting down the Department of Homeland Security or running the government on continuing resolutions or passing 2-week tax extender bills, for goodness' sake. There is not a mayor or county commissioner

in the entire State of Colorado who could get away with governing like this, and neither should we. It is obvious to everybody watching the Senate that we have not been productive. We have not really been productive for a long time but certainly not for the last 90 days. We barely managed to keep the Department of Homeland Security open for another 6 months. We passed a resolution of disapproval that the President will veto.

At the very least, we should be able to find the time to confirm Loretta Lynch as the Nation's next Attorney General. Her experience, temperament, and independence make her abundantly qualified for one of the most important positions our country has, and she has waited too long to receive an up-or-down vote.

I am not worried about her; she will be fine no matter what she does. I am worried about the Department. I am worried about our homeland security. I am worried about the willingness of other Americans to put their hand up and say ''Let me serve'' for fear that they will get caught in the crazy politics of the Senate.

I look forward to supporting Ms. Lynch's nomination. I hope we will have the opportunity to consider that nomination in the coming days.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, this is an important subject. For many, it is a matter of life and death. So I am pleased that we are taking up this bill so early in the session.

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act can save lives, it can restore dignity to the victims of these heinous crimes, and it can help end modern-day slavery. I believe, without a doubt, every Member of this body wants to see this bill become law. I hope we can overcome this delay and send the bill to the President so we can make it a reality.

As the father of three girls and as a grandfather of granddaughters, I support the bill. I cosponsored it. I am eager to see it become law. By doing so, we will build on our previous efforts that have dramatically reduced instances of human trafficking around the globe.

Since the passage of the landmark Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, the United States has been a leader in the international community's fight to end modern-day slavery. This law ushered in a new strategy that addressed human trafficking on multiple fronts.

Combining strong protection for victims, including shelter and asylum, with tough punishments for traffickers, including long jail sentences and asset confiscation, and, most importantly, sanctions for offending governments, the law has enabled us to crack some of the biggest international human smuggling rings.

The most recent statistics show that during the 12-year period from 2000 to 2012, over 1,100 traffickers were charged in the United States, resulting in 755 successful convictions. The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act can replicate these successes in combating international trafficking by helping us take on the traffickers here at home.

This is an effort by my colleagues that we can all agree is worthwhile, which is clear by how easily this passed in committee and by the level of bipartisan cosponsorship it maintains. So I am not quite certain I understand what the Democratic leadership's strategy aims to accomplish. The language they now find objectionable has been in the bill all along. It is standard language that has been around for decades.

On top of that, the majority leader offered a vote to strip the language. Yet the minority continues to block this bill from floor consideration. Not only can they offer an amendment to strip that language, but Members of the minority can offer any amendment they want, any amendment they believe will make the bill stronger. That is the amazing thing about regular order. I know some Senate Democrats are still getting used to the idea after years of being forced to the sidelines by their own leadership, but this is a good change which we should all embrace.

I believe this particular bill was strong from the onset, but I have offered a couple of amendments to make it even stronger and better. Both of these amendments make improvements to our efforts to address trafficking on the global stage.

The first one deals with countries that try to game the system to avoid sanctions. The State Department's tier system for ranking offending countries is an excellent tool for ferreting out the problem governments and prompting positive change. By utilizing the threat of sanctions, we can effect change for the better.

Regrettably, some countries have abused the system and taken advantage of the ''special watch list'' designation that is supposed to be reserved for troubled nations making good-faith efforts to actually change. These nations have been able to get this designation without ever attempting to address human trafficking and, in turn, avoiding the sanctions that they deserve. China is a perfect example.

With this amendment, we can put an end to the games. It will close the loopholes that allow governments to retain the ''special watch list'' designation without making immediate progress to reduce human trafficking or face quick removal. This will force governments to take real action, not just a nod and a wink to the problem to buy sanctions relief.

The second amendment aims to put more teeth in the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking. This amendment seeks to rename it and elevate it to the status of bureau to increase its effectiveness so that those responsible for this essential diplomatic tool are heard within the State Department.

These two amendments will help our overall strategy to combat trafficking, but again, this bill, as it was introduced, would be a huge help in our efforts to save lives.

The bill has the support of 200 advocacy groups, many of which are law enforcement organizations. These advocacy groups are voicing the same concerns we hear on the local level in our communities back home—that this is a real problem with real victims—and our local officials want this bill passed for that exact reason.

Just last week, I was visiting with some of my State's mayors who were in Washington for the Arkansas Municipal League fly-in, and the issue came up. The mayor of Hot Springs, AR, Ruth Carney, said that this is an issue which is really close to her heart and highlighted that Garland County has a task force to tackle human trafficking. She said: ''It's a great thing to see that Congress is working to help with this situation because I feel like it's very important for our country.'' I imagine that the Senators holding up this bill hear the same thing from their State and local officials. Perhaps they should listen to them about the importance of getting this done.

So why drag this on longer? We could pass this bill within hours if the Democrats would drop this manufactured outrage over language that has been in the bill since its introduction. This language has literally been applied to similar legislation for decades.

The senior Senators from Texas and Minnesota came together in a bipartisan manner to draft this important legislation. It was passed by the committee, in regular order, in a similar bipartisan manner.

I urge my colleagues to stand with the victims, pass this bill, get them help, and get our communities the resources they need to save thousands more from becoming victims.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today, we are continuing our consideration of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. I should note from the outset this is a bill that essentially every Senator—every single one of us—supports. How could we not? Right now in this country there are thousands of human beings living as slaves—stolen from their homes, stripped of their God-given rights, and robbed of their human dignity. A disproportionate number of these victims are women and children, often forced into sex slavery. These are crimes that shock the conscience, and every single one of us

should do everything in our power to stop this scourge and help make the victims whole again.

The legislation we are currently considering makes important steps toward achieving those goals. It treats children trapped in these horrible circumstances for what they are—victims, not criminals. It imposes stiff penalties on traffickers, exactly the sort their despicable crimes merit. It establishes an effective means of restitution for the victims, helping them to begin to rebuild their lives in the wake of enormous suffering.

I applaud the majority leader for his commitment to getting this bill passed. It is exactly the sort of legislation the Senate should be considering. While this may seem an obvious point, it is worth spelling out why this is true.

The majority leader's traditional right to be recognized first gives him control over what sort of legislation we consider. There is always a temptation to bring up partisan bills, so-called messaging bills. These bills are not designed to actually pass; after all, we all know we need 60 votes for cloture and 67 votes to override a veto. Instead, the goal of these messaging bills are to make a political point for the next election or even just for the next news cycle.

In the last Congress, the Democratic leadership called up these sort of messaging votes week after week. They repeatedly moved to bring up highly partisan bills that they refused to let us attempt to amend, with full knowledge that many of us would therefore have to vote against them and in most cases have to make them get at least 60 votes.

In last fall's election, the American people showed just how fed up they were with partisanship and gridlock by voting in a new Republican majority that promised a return to productive legislating through regular order. The majority leader's commitment to passing this human trafficking bill demonstrates how those of us in the new majority are trying our hardest to keep our promise to get the Senate back to work for the American people. This is not about partisan messaging votes doomed for failure. This is about getting a bill with broad bipartisan support passed into law that makes meaningful progress in our fight against the evils of human trafficking. Scoring political points for our party is rightfully taking a backseat for producing important results for our country.

Nevertheless, our majority can only do so much on its own. Simply put, it is hard to get much done in the Senate without bipartisan cooperation. So for all the restraint the majority has shown by bringing up bills such as this one that enjoy broad bipartisan support, we need at least some measure of restraint from the minority. By restraint, I do not mean to call for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to give up all their principles and simply give in to everything the majority wants. Instead, I mean the minority cannot demand getting their way on every single issue, that they should be willing to work through the open amendment process to reach an accommodation. Unfortunately, we find ourselves at an impasse with the minority claiming we somehow ambushed them with supposedly controversial language that they now are demanding we remove. My colleagues and I have come to the floor repeatedly over the past few days to illustrate just how ridiculous that claim is—how the language that is in the bill has been in there every step of the way since its introduction and how the Democrats had voted for it over and over again over the nearly 40 years it has been settled law.

Beyond all of the rhetoric, the pivotal moment in this debate came when the majority leader came to the floor and offered an up-or-down vote to strip out the language in question. This offer should have settled this controversy once and for all. It represented the majority leader extending his hand across the aisle in hopes of cooperation, but the minority leader objected, demanding a guarantee the provision would be removed. Well, that is not the way it works around here. That moment revealed what this logjam is really about. This is about the minority leadership resorting to the same ''my way or the highway'' tactics they abused when they were in the majority, tactics that have no place in a body built on compromise. This is about trying to stir up a fake controversy to fit a discredited war-on-women narrative.

Above all else, this is about scoring political points and trying to embarrass the majority by undermining our efforts to govern responsibly. This behavior is itself embarrassing and unworthy of this great institution in which we all serve, but it comes at a price.

It comes at a price for the victims of human trafficking whose suffering we are all committed to alleviate. It comes at a price for those men, women, and children living in silence, fear, hopelessness, and unspeakable anguish.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle are not bad people—far from it. They are men and women of great character who want to do the right thing for their constituents and for the Nation. I have enormous respect for each and every one of them, but in this latest maneuver, I feel many of them have gotten so caught up in partisan rhetoric—something that is so easy to do in Washington—that they have staked out an unjustifiable position that is prolonging the suffering of trafficking victims.

Let's be honest about it. The Hyde amendment has been in many bills that we all voted for time after time after time. However, NARAL, the National Abortion Rights Action League, and Planned Parenthood have tried to make this into an issue that it should never have been made into. Unfortunately, we don't have any courage on the other side of the aisle except for a few Senators who are willing to vote with us. We don't have any real courage to take on these people.

My gosh. I mean there comes a time—keep in mind, how do Republicans give in on this when this has been such an established law of our country?

I ask my colleagues to take a step back from the heat of the debate to think about this language that has been in the bill from the very beginning, that they have voted for in so many other contexts, that has been the settled law of the land for nearly 40 years, that they have rejected an up-or-down vote to remove, and that they have demanded be removed as a condition for passing this important legislation.

Is picking this fight really worth it?

Is scoring points against Republicans really worth the costs of victims of human trafficking?

Is trying to undermine our efforts to govern worth sacrificing the opportunity to help these men, women, and children in need?

The choice is clear. I applaud my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who are pushing to end this stalemate, especially my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who are willing to sacrifice temporary political gain to do the right thing for these victims we all want to help. I plead with those who have yet to join our efforts to move this bill forward to realize the suffering they are prolonging and to change their approach at the earliest possible opportunity.

GEOSPATIAL DATA REFORM ACT

Mr. President, in addition to urging the passage of the bill under consideration to fight human trafficking, I want to highlight another important bipartisan bill I have introduced and urge its speedy consideration. It is exactly the sort of productive legislating in which I believe the Senate should be engaged.

I rise in strong support of the Geospatial Data Reform Act, a bipartisan bill that will save taxpayers money while improving public safety, bolstering public development and preserving our natural resources through wider accessibility to geospatial data.

I am grateful for Senator WARNER's collaboration on this bill. Without his partnership this legislation would not have been possible, and I wish to thank him for his support over the past several months. Together we have worked tirelessly to craft bipartisan legislation that streamlines the way Federal agencies collect, manage, and distribute geospatial data to better serve the American people.

Whether we realize it or not, geospatial data is ubiquitous in our everyday lives. Geospatial data is the information that identifies the geographic locations and characteristics of

natural or constructed features and objects. To make this abstract concept more tangible, consider that every time we turn to the GPS on our phones we rely on geospatial data to find our destination. Geospatial data is an invaluable information resource, and we are just beginning to tap its full potential.

Every year, private businesses and government agencies are finding new and innovative ways to use this information to better deliver services to the public and to improve overall quality of life. FEMA's use of geospatial data during Hurricane Sandy is testament to the merits of this information resource.

The tragedy of Hurricane Sandy is still fresh in our memories. In 2012, this late autumn storm ravaged our eastern seaboard, battering buildings, toppling homes, and demolishing power lines, leaving behind a wake of destruction and shattered lives. Sandy was the deadliest hurricane to reach our shores since Katrina in 2005. In addition to the human toll, Sandy extracted a heavy financial cost, with estimated damages exceeding well over $50 billion. By using geospatial data, our government was better equipped to respond to this catastrophe. As victims rummaged through the rubble and wreckage of their broken homes, FEMA set to work analyzing geospatial datasets to identify over 40,000 homes damaged by the storm. This information allowed the Agency to pinpoint the most devastated neighborhoods and dispatch emergency personnel to those areas more quickly and efficiently. The use of geospatial data in response to this tragedy played an integral role in coordinating emergency response and helping families repair their damaged lives.

The way FEMA used geospatial data to aid victims of Hurricane Sandy is just one powerful example of the positive impacts geospatial data has on our lives.

But there are many more. The CDC also uses geospatial data to track disease outbreaks, informing decisions that ultimately save lives, the Department of Education uses geospatial data to analyze test scores from schools across the country to make plans for improvement, and the National Park Service uses geospatial data for resource management and to conserve our Nation's natural treasures.

There is almost no end to the sundry uses and benefits of geospatial data, but as the Federal Government invests billions of dollars every year in the collection and storage of geospatial data, there is a serious problem of interagency duplication. This duplication stems from a glaring lack of coordination between agencies on efforts to collect this information. In short, agencies are spending inordinate sums in taxpayer dollars to collect the same geospatial data other agencies may have already collected.

These duplicative efforts are a monumental and inexcusable waste of taxpayer money. Although the executive branch has been working for decades to reduce duplication and standardize the process for collecting and storing geospatial information, it has received little help from Congress.

The legislation Senator WARNER and I have introduced provides the executive branch the resources and direction it needs to reduce duplication and engender cooperation among agencies to ensure the efficient collection and dissemination of geospatial data across all levels of government. To save the taxpayers money, our bill requires Federal agencies to implement international consensus standards for geospatial data and assist in eliminating duplication.

The Geospatial Reform Act also codifies the implementation of the national spatial data infrastructure and provides agencies with a clear definition for geospatial data and metadata.

In addition, this bill standardizes the collection process by requiring agencies to comply with the Federal Geospatial Data Committee's standards for the development, sharing, and use of geospatial information.

Finally, our bill ensures accountability, transparency, and public access to nondefense-related Federal investments in geospatial data. Already, States, counties, municipalities, and the private sector are discovering dynamic ways to use and share geospatial data with one another.

Collaboration in this sphere is leading the way for new and improved services that were previously impossible to deliver. These entities outside of the Federal Government are finding new ways to coordinate investments and implement common standards. We need to do the same on the national level. We need proper Federal management for these data assets, and we need a national strategy for their many uses.

Our legislation provides the foundation for both. In a political environment clouded by polarization, this bill is a ray of hope. It is an opportunity for us to work together in a bipartisan fashion to pass commonsense legislation that is based on transparency and good governance.

I urge all of my colleagues to support the American taxpayer by supporting this bill. It is the right thing to do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business, and that following me, the Senator from Washington be allowed to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

OSO MUDSLIDE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, almost 1 year ago, on a calm Saturday morning in the small town of Oso, more than a square mile of mud rushed down a mountainside in my home State of Washington. In a matter of seconds, dozens of homes were destroyed, dozens of people were missing, and they were trapped in the debris from the mudslide.

It was unclear at first the extent of the damage, the number of people trapped, and what could be done in the face of such devastation. First responders risked their own lives, braving dangerous conditions to look for survivors. Some were pulled from the rubble, but so many, too many, were lost. Houses over more than a square mile were simply swept away. The main highway to nearby Darrington was blocked, isolating that community. Forty-three people—children, mothers, brothers, and aunts—were killed.

This was the deadliest mudslide in our country's history. A year later, there is not a single person in Oso who has not been affected by this devastating natural disaster. In the blink of an eye, they saw water and earth wipe away their homes and their entire community. Let me tell you what I found when I visited the small nearby town of Arlington, where recovery plans were being made just days after the mudslide occurred 1 year ago.

I saw small towns like so many across the country in all of our States, the types of towns where everybody knows each other, the types of places where everyone stops to say hello and lend a helping hand. What I saw that day last March was a community where there was not a single person who was not doing every single thing they could to help.

Amidst the terrible destruction, I saw hope. I spoke to firefighters who had not slept for days, refusing to stop searching for survivors. I saw neighbors and friends and volunteers providing food and shelter and hugs and prayers, anything to assist the community who had experienced the unthinkable.

I want to tell one story from the days following that awful moment, a story that has been told before but bears repeating. A local woman named Rhonda Cook heard about the slide and she found out that her friend was driving by and was buried when the slide hit. Rhonda spent days digging through that debris looking for that blue car she knew was there somewhere, determined to bring her friend out of the mud.

When that car was finally uncovered and her friend's body was lifted out, Rhonda paused to pay her last respects. But then she kept on digging, looking for others. Rhonda is just one of the many heroes. There were so many, and so many more who continue working to this very day.

Last year, I joined many others in a pledge to stand with the people of Oso and Darrington in the months and years to come and to do whatever we could to help them on the road to recovery. I was proud to work with my colleagues in the Senate and with our friends in the House to make sure the Federal Government was offering a hand, because we are a nation that sticks together when times are tough.

We worked to secure housing grants and FEMA funding and transportation investments to repair State Route 530. More than 600 National Guard soldiers were deployed to help in the emergency response. The main highway through Darrington reopened finally last summer. Homes are now being rebuilt. Lives are being pieced back together. While I am so grateful for all that has been done to aid the recovery, our work is far from done.

Although the devastation will eventually be cleared, injuries will heal, the emotional scars will always remain, and the memory of those who were lost will never leave us. A disaster of this magnitude requires long-term assistance to help these communities respond, rebuild, and cope. Now a year down the long road of recovery, there is one word that comes to mind when trying to explain what the people of Oso and Darrington are at their core: resilient.

Aid workers searched for remains to return to loved ones for as long as 4 months after that mudslide. A man who lost his wife and son gave thousands of dollars in donations to other victims who he thought needed the money more than himself.

The people of Oso and Darrington will look back on March 22, 2014, this weekend, remembering lost homes and lost loved ones and even pets. I want those communities to know that all the way here across the country in the other Washington, I stand with Oso. We stand with Oso. Their resiliency in the face of such unthinkable devastation is an inspiration to us all. We will always remember what it means to be ''Oso strong.'' They have the thoughts and prayers of everyone in the country to continue rebuilding, from Washington State to Washington, DC, and everywhere in between.

I yield the floor to my colleague, Senator CANTWELL, who, as I was, was there time and time again with this community.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleague from Washington, Senator MURRAY, on the observance of this very solemn milestone. This Sunday will be 1 year since this catastrophic event. I want to thank Senator MURRAY for something she did not mention, which is her leadership on helping us get passed the Green Mountain Lookout legislation in the aftermath of this event, which is legislation that she had championed for a long time and yet had been stuck. When people realized there were things we could do for this community to help restore its recreational and economic activity, she got on it and we were able to pass that very quickly. So I thank her for that leadership.

This Sunday is a very solemn milestone, because 43 Washingtonians lost their lives in a very destructive mudslide that buried the highway between the communities of Darrington and Oso and nearby Arlington. These communities lost loved ones, friends. Their memory will be with us for a long time. These communities have shown that even in the most unimaginable devastation, people can come together in unity and persevere. They showed how light and hope can shine through even in grief.

Now, after many months, stores are reopening, the highway is again bustling, there are new connections of Internet and phone lines being restored, residents are rebuilding, and they are hoping for a brighter economic future.

As my colleague said, we were very inspired by the hope and grace of this community, that continues to demonstrate that on a daily basis. It is hard to believe that a year has gone by. On that morning, it became just like every other morning, a rainy Saturday morning, and people went about their business. But as the heavy rain weakened one of the hills in the Stillaguamish Valley, the resulting landslide was approximately 1 square mile. Forty-nine homes were destroyed, 530 were covered, and the Stillaguamish River was basically rerouted. So many problems arose. But immediately more than 1,000 volunteers descended. Many from the local community, with their own transportation systems, their own rigs, came to the river and devoted thousands of hours to try to help survivors and to help the community recover.

This American flag was hoisted by one of the firefighters. It is tacked to a standing nearby tree, just to show our resilience. Much like the American flag, this community was battered and bruised but was very proud. During those days, many Washingtonians would make sure that every resource was made available to this community. When faced with these immense challenges, these communities of Darrington and Oso pulled together and, yes, Oso became ''Oso strong.''

It was a rallying cry for the volunteers, to the young people, to many people who were working many hours a day. Private companies and individuals, corporations, tribes, charities, nonprofits—all sorts of governments chipped in. Everybody helped. We want to thank them for that help. It was just a year ago that it seemed as though every resource covered the festival grounds and the Forest Service parking lot, FEMA, Snohomish County, the Department of Natural Resources, the National Guard, fire departments up and down the State. They continued to make sure everything was addressed—recovery efforts underway, local people gathered, such as the small business owner there in Darrington, Kevin Ash, who tried to keep a plan for every business to stay open.

We looked at what could be accomplished for the future. Out of these meetings, we were able to secure a $150,000 grant from the Economic Development Administration to draft an economic disaster recovery plan for the community. That plan is set to be unveiled in June and help the local economy that once was heavily dependent on logging that was hit hard by this disaster.

Senator MURRAY and I have worked with Mayor Dan Rankin from Darrington, whose leadership and on-the-job focus for this has helped the community continue to survive this incredible disaster. There are so many strategies Mayor Dan has put into place that are about how the community moves forward.

Over the past year, the Small Business Administration awarded $400,000 in low-interest loans to help rehabilitate businesses in the area. It is helping the Darrington-Arlington economy and others in the affected area. Through their innovation and hard work, everybody is trying to help what is called the Upper Stillaguamish Valley not just get back to where it was but flourish in the future. This is some of the most beautiful territory in our State, from the heights of Glacier Peak to the depths of the Upper Stillaguamish Valley. This typifies the beauty of the Northwest.

I want to make sure we thank the appropriate people who helped us in this response: President Obama, who visited the area; Homeland Secretary Jeh Johnson; FEMA Director Craig Fugate; obviously our Governor; Representative DELBENE, who was there practically every moment of this disaster, from the moment it happened, for days and days and days, and then around the clock, shuttling back and forth between Washington, DC, and the site; Congressman LARSEN; obviously SBA Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet, who came to the site; the Red Cross; the Oso fire station.

We talk about first responders here. But when you see first responders for small communities step up and address such an incredible natural disaster and coordinate everything—I want to say a thanks to Willy Harper from the Oso fire station, and Travis Hots, who was the incident command leader for the first several days from Snohomish County Fire District, which brought all of the resources together to try to make the planning and recovery efforts for this incredible disaster go as smoothly as possible; County Executive John Lovick and Sheriff Ty Trenary. I also want to say Arlington Mayor Barbara Tolbert did more for the community in using every resource she had to help support the recovery of these Washington residents. Some communities might say, well, that is somewhere down the road, and who is going to help us? But she put every Arlington resource onto this site, knowing it might be months and months and months before she ever saw any of the resources to reimburse them.

We want to thank Arlington for everything they did. So while we will this weekend be having a moment of silence on the site, we have to remember the

individuals we lost, and how we need to move ahead. This hillside bears an unmistakable scar. It has inflicted deep wounds. But it is healing because of the friends and neighbors who have strengthened us in this region.

We want to make sure that the memories of those we lost will fuel our determination to do better. Regardless, it is not going to be easy, it is not going to be quick, but we will continue to build off of the strength this community demonstrated in the aftermath of this disaster.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, on behalf of myself and Senator HEITKAMP, I send an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment will be received.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, for the past 10 days this body has been engaged in an important debate on a bill that has had widespread, bipartisan support, that was reported unanimously by the Senate Judiciary Committee, and that would help to end the scourge of human trafficking.

I am a cosponsor of this bill because I believe it will help equip law enforcement and prosecutors with the tools they need to combat these horrific sex trafficking crimes.

I, along with my colleague, Senator LEAHY, have also introduced a bill—that we have filed as an amendment—that would reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs so we can also have a prevention piece in this legislation.

Many Members of this body have worked very hard on this legislation. Senator CORNYN, whose bill we are considering, has been a real leader in the area of human trafficking. Senator KLOBUCHAR also has a bill I have been proud to cosponsor. Senator GRASSLEY and Senator LEAHY, at the request of all 20 of the women Senators, held a hearing on this issue at which I was privileged to testify, along with Senator AYOTTE, Senator MIKULSKI, and Senator GILLIBRAND.

I applaud the Judiciary Committee for its work in shining a light on some of the darkest stories imaginable. No State is immune from the evils of human trafficking.

Just recently in Maine, a couple was arrested for allegedly trafficking a girl who was only 13 years old. They used the Internet to sell her for sex.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act that Senator LEAHY and I have cosponsored seeks to prevent young people from ever getting trapped in these situations in the first place, and I hope we can move on to that bill, which we have filed as an amendment.

But, regrettably, we find ourselves at an impasse—imagine that—an impasse on a bill that would help curb human trafficking. How can that be?

Senator HEITKAMP and I have joined forces to try to move this bill forward. That is our goal, and the goal of the amendment we have filed.

What our amendment would do, and it is very straightforward, is it would subject the fund that Senator CORNYN has created, and which I strongly support, to the annual appropriations process and to all of the usual restrictions that the Appropriations Committee can and does add to appropriations bills.

There is precedent for taking a fund that is not financed by tax dollars and sending it through the appropriations process. It, frankly, happens all the time. We have seen it with the oil and gas revenues that go to the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Those are not tax dollars.

We have seen it with a number of fees and restitution programs that are not tax dollars but go through the appropriations process, where the Appropriations Committee can work its will.

Under out amendment, all of the money collected from special assessments imposed on certain trafficking criminals and deposited into the fund would still be made available to anti-trafficking and victims' services grant programs, but only through the direction of the annual appropriations process. By placing the fund squarely within the jurisdiction of appropriators, each and every penny collected would be subject to the limitations in those appropriations bills. Our amendment would strike the reference that has been the sources of this controversy from this authorizing bill, but does not alter that restriction on federal funds that has existed for 39 years.

Our amendment makes clear that money in the fund, or transferred from the fund, is subject to the limitations provided in appropriations acts.

I believe our amendment, by allowing the Appropriations Committee to put whatever restrictions are appropriate on this fund—and I have no doubt the usual restrictions will be put on by the Appropriations Committee—could get this bill to move forward, and those such as Senator CORNYN, Senator KLOBUCHAR, and others who have worked so hard to bring this bill to the Senate floor, will see there is a path forward.

We owe it to the victims of human trafficking. We owe it to the victims of human trafficking. We owe it to them. We cannot fail in this task. If we cannot approve a bill to deal with human trafficking, then what will we be able to deal with?

We have to get past the tendency to score partisan, political points that have affected too many bills on both sides of the aisle. In this case, it is simply too important.

I thank my dear friend and colleague from North Dakota, Senator HEITKAMP, who has been an attorney general, who has dealt with the victims of this terrible crime, for coming forward and joining with me as we attempt to put forth—for our colleagues' sincere consideration—a path forward that will end this impasse.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I thank my great friend, the Senator from Maine. She has been so instrumental in achieving compromise in the body, whether it is in the Commonsense Caucus, when we were in shut down, or it is just bridging the gap many times and trying to find a path forward for us to legislate in the Senate. She truly is a champion in her efforts in trying to make this body work.

I wish to start off by saying that as an attorney general, the whole while I was attorney general—for 8 years—there was very little activity on prostitution. When I was running for office, I visited with law enforcement—and I still have a lot of friends in law enforcement—and I asked them: What are your challenges? Every local sheriff, especially those in western North Dakota, and every city chief of police said: We have a growing concern with prostitution.

I started thinking about that. I started thinking about what that meant. Then I started looking behind what those claims of prostitution were, and I began to realize that for very many of these young women—often children—who are in this life of prostitution, it is not by choice. This is some of the most horrific victimization that goes on in America today—the victimization of small children, the dehumanization of small children, the challenge of a recovery once they are given an opportunity to find a different path forward, the addiction that comes with it, the grooming that comes with it, and the shame that comes with it.

Many people say they want to prevent this, but very often we know the victims of human trafficking come from homes that weren't the healthiest of homes. These are very often runaways, they are homeless youth, and they have no other option for recovering, they have no other option for sustaining their life than being part of this horrific experience.

So as my great friend from Maine talks about this, we need to do a better job in getting the tools for prosecution, which is the excellent bill Senator KLOBUCHAR has advanced for promoting safe harbor legislation, which will not only help in the path to recovery but also will give us an opportunity to encourage more and more of these victims to come forward as witnesses for the prosecution. It is very difficult to convince someone who has been told for years and years, as they have been in the life, that ''If you tell about this victimization, what will happen is you will go to jail with me. So we have to

stick together.'' How do we break that cycle of control? We break it by providing opportunity, which these bills do. We break it by passing the homeless youth and runaway bill. We break it by focusing a bright light on this problem.

I could not have been prouder of this body as we moved toward these series of bills on homeless youth and moved forward on these series of bills on trafficking. This body was speaking for some of the most disenfranchised citizens in our country—those victims of human trafficking. So you can imagine my despair and I think the despair of a lot of victims groups and the despair of a lot of people in this body when we reached this impasse.

It is important that we say that the goal now is not to rehash what has happened in the past, it is not to rehash the problems and the concerns everybody has had in the past. We must set aside all of that. Set aside all of the rancor we have heard for the last week and focus on one thing: Focus on a victim who may be watching us. Focus on a victim's advocate who may be wanting and needing and desperately seeking the help we can provide that advocate in providing a secure future for these victims. Let's focus on them. Let's focus on what we can do to bridge this impasse.

My friend Senator COLLINS and I think we have, as she has described it, advanced a proposal that we believe firmly resolves all the issues. It sets forth a path where we can, in fact, move forward and listen to the voices that don't get heard very often in places like Washington, DC, and respond to their concerns, respond to the victimization, be the empathetic body I know we can be by saying: Yes, we can help, and we will help.

So my colleague and I hope this will at least generate enough discussion, provide at least enough of a bridge forward that we can continue to have the dialogue, continue to address amendments—if we can get through this—and actually move this issue forward.

I yield to my great friend from Maine, but I would like to ask her a question. As an appropriator, I know there may be some controversy. She has raised this already. There is some discussion that this may not be an appropriate place to make this decision, and I would like my colleague to elaborate on the appropriations process.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. If I could respond through the Chair, Mr. President, I do have the privilege of serving on the Committee on Appropriations, and I have seen the restrictions we have put on funds over the years. One of those restrictions which is at issue here goes back 39 years. So it is not unusual for the Committee on Appropriations to put certain limitations on the use of funds.

As I explained earlier, the Committee on Appropriations also deals with nontax dollars. It is not unusual for us to appropriate money that comes from the collection of fines, of fees, of penalties, from leases. This is common. So what we are proposing in this bill is not anything new, unusual, or unique. It would be part of the standard appropriations process.

Indeed, Senator CORNYN actually raised the idea on the floor today of having the victims fund go through the appropriations process. We differ in language, so I don't want to imply there is any endorsement, but the concept is one the author of the bill has raised.

So in response to my colleague from North Dakota, who has spoken so eloquently of her experience in dealing with the victims of human trafficking, I would assure her that as a member of the Committee on Appropriations, I know full well that we put restrictions and limitations on funding as a standard course.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I would like to have a moment where we think about this body and how impressed everybody throughout the country is, how proud they are of our system of government, how proud of the great decisions that have been made in this room and of the great deliberations and the great debates. This truly is a remarkable government, and it is a remarkable system. But it has always been remarkable because it is not just the wealthy and powerful who have a voice in this body. With us comes the opportunity to speak for the most disadvantaged Americans, the most disadvantaged people in our system. And I cannot imagine a more horrific life than the life of being sold into prostitution. I cannot imagine a more horrific life than being enslaved through the horrible events of human trafficking.

Let's speak for those victims. Let's speak for those advocates who work so hard, who have been so encouraged that an issue such as this has become a priority issue for the United States of America. Let's try to bridge this gap. Let's work across the aisle, and let's reach to find a way forward because these victims deserve our attention, they deserve this debate, and they deserve our voice.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I again want to thank my colleague from North Dakota for her very eloquent plea to our colleagues.

I know we can do this. I know we can find a path forward. I know we can get a sufficient number of votes so that we can proceed and debate the many amendments that have been filed on this bill. I know we can do it. The victims of this horrific crime deserve no less from the United States Senate, so let's not fail them. Let's not fail them.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor again today to talk about the importance of getting the bill passed, and we have seen today for the first time—I talked I think 3 hours yesterday—the need to change the tone and try to work across the aisle on some ideas to move forward with this bill. That is happening in many conversations in this Senate Chamber and in offices, and I am pleased that we have had a change in tone and that we have some possibility of moving forward. I thank my colleagues for that.

Senator CORNYN and I have worked on this issue for a long time. In addition to the bill that is on the floor today, we also have the important safe harbor bill that I am leading and that Representative ERIK PAULSEN is leading in the House. This is a bill—since it went out of the Judiciary Committee unanimously and has none of the issues and controversy involved in the current bill on the floor—I hope will be able to get through this Senate Chamber in the coming week as either part of this bill or on its own.

This safe harbor bill, of course, is about treating the victims of sex trafficking as victims and not treating them as criminals when they are 12 years old. It is taking a model from Minnesota and 15 States and now creating incentives to bring it out to the rest of the country.

So what is it we have been talking about here over this last week? We are talking about 27 million people around the world who are victims of some kind of trafficking every year. Some of this is labor trafficking, but what we are focused on this week is sex trafficking. It is the third biggest criminal enterprise in the world. The first is illegal trafficking of drugs, the second is illegal trafficking of guns, and the third is illegal trafficking of girls and young boys. And the average age is 12 years old—not even old enough to drive a car, not even old enough to go to their first prom.

Last year, I went to Mexico with Cindy McCain, and we met with a number of officials and prosecutors and victim advocates who were working to fight this crime in Mexico. We visited a shelter for abused girls. We met with the Attorney General and with the Federal Police. But what I most remember of all of those meetings as to how we could better coordinate our focus on sex trafficking was the visit to the Covenant House in Mexico City, where there were girls as young as 11 years old who were victims of trafficking.

There was one girl who truly stood out. Her name was Paloma. She was new to the house which had taken her in and was in the first stage of recovery. Unlike the other girls who spoke

through an interpreter, she could speak English, but all she could say was her name, and then she couldn't stop crying. And while some of the other girls told their stories, she never told her stories in words. She only told her story through her tears. That is a moment I won't forget.

It reminded me of something I heard when I visited a refugee camp once in Jordan, where a mother said she had seen things that would make stones cry. That is what that little girl Paloma was saying through her tears, that the experiences she had had of being trafficked at 11 years old would make stones cry. These are real stories.

When Polaris—one of the major groups working on this issue of sex trafficking—released their State-by-State rankings of efforts to fight human trafficking, here is what they had to say:

> The scope and scale of human trafficking within the United States presents a daunting challenge to policymakers, service providers, law enforcement, and advocates. Originally, human trafficking was thought to be more of a problem in other countries, but now it is known to be happening in our own backyards. It is estimated that there are hundreds of thousands of victims of sex and labor trafficking inside our borders.

But what we know today is that 83 percent of the victims in the United States are from the United States. It is not just girls at the bottom of a ship—which does happen—it is girls right in our country, girls right in Minnesota, on the streets of Rochester, where just in the last few months we had a 12-year-old girl who got a text inviting her to a party, showed up at a McDonald's parking lot where she was supposed to go, a guy puts her in a car, takes her up to the Twin Cities, rapes her, takes sexually explicit pictures of her, puts them on the Internet. The next day she is sold on Craigslist to two other men and raped. That happened in Minnesota. That man has now been indicted by the U.S. Attorney's office. But we have seen these cases over and over again.

People say, why is this getting worse? Why is the Senate debating this issue right now? It is because, as much as we love the Internet, we also know it has provided a vehicle for this kind of activity so that it is much easier for people to do behind closed doors where no one notices them basically get these young girls in their grasp.

Yesterday I spent nearly 3 hours reading from a book by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn about international sex trafficking called ''Half the Sky.'' I did that because I felt the tone had gotten so bad in this Chamber on both sides, with people hurling accusations and not even being willing to talk about possible ways to resolve this, and I am glad again that now we are finally talking today.

They have another book about domestic sex trafficking, which is the focus of the bill on the floor today, as well as our safe harbor bill. They tell a story of a girl named Clemmie. The book is called ''A Path Appears.'' They say:

> One of the first women whom Becca helped was Clemmie Greenlee, an African American woman who had been raped repeatedly beginning at the age of five and then systematically pimped from the age of twelve. Clemmie began drinking at the age of eight, dropped out of school in fourth grade, and soon became a heroin addict and an expert at robbing johns. On one occasion she did more than steal. A customer was beating her so badly, so she pulled out a knife and stabbed him. ''I didn't see blood, so I stabbed him again, four more times,'' she said. He almost died, but fortunately for Greenlee he was a married man who begged the police not to press charges, and without his testimony they didn't have a case. She was freed.
>
> By 2001, Greenlee was a gaunt eighty-five pounds, sleeping on the streets or in abandoned buildings, all of her money was going to crack cocaine. She had had a son who was killed in gang violence. She was seen as having so little commercial value that pimps abandoned her. An old friend from the streets found Greenlee in a crack house and dragged her over to see Reverend Stevens at Magdalene.

This is an example of what we are seeing across this country—right in our own country. These stories are so raw and so ugly, but I tell them and read from that book yesterday just so people remember why we are here and what we are dealing with, so we can put some of these issues—extraneous issues, things we need to change in the bill and fix in the bill, that we have some motivation to do it. These girls really don't know how to change the laws in Congress. They need our help to do that.

My good friend Cindy McCain, through her work at the McCain Institute—and I see Senator RUBIO here from Florida, who is also familiar with that work and knows what she has done. They undertook a study looking to get some baseline data on sex trafficking around big events. We have seen what happens where we have increases in Web site advertising and other things, and we have seen what happens when law enforcement actually comes together across all jurisdictional lines—Federal, State, and local—when the private sector engages, like our hotels—hotels like the Radisson Hotels in Minnesota. Marilyn Carlson Nelson has been such a leader on this, and has really set up and helped to fund foundations, because they see it. They know their workers are on the frontline and can actually stop it from happening—or airlines, like Delta, American, United that are on the frontlines and they train employees so they can stop this from happening.

So, yes, these bills will help. The bill we have on the floor right now that Senator CORNYN and I worked on, and many others in this Chamber, will help get funds for the victims and for these shelters. The bill I am leading with Senator CORNYN will actually help to make sure our States get incentives to make sure we are handling these criminal prosecutions in a way that works, that emboldens the victims so they don't go back to the pimps, so they don't go back to that cycle of violence, so they actually feel they are in a safe harbor, that they are in a safe place so they will testify against these perpetrators—the ones running these rings, these crooks, these people who are treating these young girls as chattel. That is what these bills are about.

So we need a path forward. I think for the first time today we are seeing—despite no agreement yet and a lot of ideas out there, we are seeing a different tone. I want people to remember that not only will this bill involve the fund I am talking about, but once we either join it or pass separately our safe harbor law, it will also create incentives for States to change their laws. It will also create a national sex trafficking strategy that is in my safe harbor law. It will also allow these young girls who are victims to be part of job training programs and other things, to make it easier for our law enforcement with an amendment that I included in my bill from Senator SESSIONS and Senator WHITEHOUSE with the U.S. Marshals. There are many good things that are going to help.

Mostly, we are going to send a message from this Chamber, finally, after all of this acrimony over the last days and all of the blame, that we can finally send a message to that little girl named Paloma that this country believes in her. We believe these lives have value, and we must stand by these victims and stand up for these victims—not only in our country but internationally.

I thank the Presiding Officer. I thank my colleagues. I know these conversations are continuing as we work to find a path forward. I thank Senator CORNYN for the work we have done together. I look forward to getting this done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, let me begin by acknowledging the work the sponsors of the human trafficking bill are doing. Trafficking is a sanitized way to discuss this issue. It is actually slavery, and I am glad that term is finding its way into the lexicon of how this is discussed.

It is not just the sex trafficking—sex slavery—it is also labor trafficking, which is a major problem in this country as well.

I do hope we can find a way forward on this one. It is an extraordinarily important issue, one that has taken far too long to pay attention to. It is not something that happens just around the world, but it happens here closer than we think.

ISRAEL

Mr. President, I want to talk about a separate topic today as well. It is one a

lot of people have been reading about in the newspapers over the last 72 hours.

As we all know, there was an election in Israel this week, and many people are wondering: What is this aftermath of the election we keep reading about, where there is this controversy and back and forth? Certainly some of that happened a few weeks ago, when the Prime Minister of Israel visited Washington and spoke before the Congress. People are wondering, what is it that is going on here and why is there so much controversy around all this? I want to take a moment to delve deeper into this, because this is important.

First of all, to answer the fundamental question: Why should we care about what is happening with Israel, in Israel, and about Israel? There are two reasons I think we should care.

The first is because Israel represents everything we want that region of the world to be. Israel is a democracy, as evidenced by the vibrant election process they just underwent. Israel is a free enterprise economy, a developed economy, that provides prosperity for its people and its partners in trade and commerce. And Israel is a strong American ally—a democracy, a free enterprise, and a strong American ally.

Don't we wish the entire Middle East looked that way? Don't we wish we had more countries in the Middle East that looked like Israel—that were allies, that were democratic, and had a free and prosperous economy? How much better would the world be if the Middle East looked more like Israel and less like Iraq and Syria and other places look like at this moment?

There is another reason why we should care about Israel. Israel is not just another country. It has a special and unique purpose. It was founded as a homeland for the Jewish people in the aftermath of the Second World War and of the Holocaust, where over 6 million human beings were slaughtered. It was founded on the promise that never again in the history of the world would there not be a place for the Jewish people to go and be safe. It is not just a nation, it is a nation with a special and unique purpose unlike any other nation in the world, and I for one am proud that the United States has stood with Israel for all these years, and I am proud that the American people on a bipartisan basis have stood behind the Jewish State of Israel for all of these years. So the security, safety, and future of Israel is in our national security interest, as well as a moral obligation of every Member of this body and us as a nation.

What are the underpinnings of Israeli security? There are two things. First, the ability of Israel to defend itself; and the second, the reality that if Israel ever has to defend itself, the United States will be there to support them.

There is little doubt about the first pillar of its security. As the Prime Minister reminded us: Unlike many other countries, Israel is not asking us to send American soldiers or aircraft to support them. They are willing to defend themselves. But the second pillar, about strong and unquestionable American support, is increasingly being questioned around the world. And there is good reason why.

Let's begin with the aftermath of this recent election.

As far as I know—maybe this has changed in the last few hours—after this election, the President has yet to call the Prime Minister. That is unlike, of course, the fact that in March of 2012, he was among the first to call and congratulate Putin in Moscow. Or that in June of 2012, he was among the first to call Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood when they won the Egyptian Presidency. Or that in November of 2012, he called to congratulate the top Chinese Communists on their new position—which, by the way, is not elected in the way you and I would consider there to be an election. Or the fact that in 2013, there was an historic phone call. They bragged about how he called the Iranian President and congratulated him on his election. And of course, in August of 2014, he called to congratulate Turkey's President Erdogan.

And on and on.

Time and again, this President has made a habit of quickly calling these leaders when they win. But as of 4:40 p.m. eastern time, as far as I know, that call has yet not been made. Thinking about all the things that have been going on with Israel, we would think he would be quick to make that call. It hasn't happened. Maybe it has already, but it certainly didn't happen fast enough.

But where does this come from? Is this new? Is this something that just happened recently? It isn't. In fact, we can start to see the trends here pretty early.

In October of 2008, then-Senator Obama told an audience in Cleveland:

> There is a strain within the pro-Israel community that says unless you adopt an unwavering pro-Likud [one of the political parties in Israel] approach to Israel that you're anti-Israel.

Which is a silly comment to make, since at that time that party had been out of power.

In January of 2009, the President, upon taking office, makes a quick phone call to the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas before he even phoned the Israeli Prime Minister. Abbas's spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeina quoted Obama as saying:

> This is my first phone call to a foreign leader, and I'm making it only hours after I took office.

In July of 2009, the President hosted American Jewish leaders at the White House, and he reportedly told them that he sought to put ''daylight'' between America and Israel. Here is the quote that someone at that meeting says he made: ''For eight years [during the Bush administration] there was no light between the United States and Israel, and nothing got accomplished,'' he declared.

In September of 2009, in his first address to the U.N. General Assembly, President Obama devoted five paragraphs to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, during which he declared—to loud applause; by the way, in the United Nations, no surprise—''America does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements.'' He went on to draw a connection between rocket attacks on Israeli civilians with living conditions in Gaza. There was not a single unconditional criticism of Palestinian terrorism.

In March of 2010, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton berated Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu on a now infamous 45-minute call, telling him that Israel had ''harmed the bilateral relationship.'' By the way, the State Department triumphantly shared details of the call with the press. That same month, the Israeli Ambassador was dressed down at the State Department, and Mr. Obama's Middle East envoy canceled his trip to Israel, and the United States under his leadership joined the European condemnation of Israel.

In May of 2011, the State Department issued a press release declaring that the Department's No. 2 official would be visiting ''Israel, Jerusalem, and the West Bank,'' as if Jerusalem was not part of Israel. So they left that separate.

Later in the month, only hours before Mr. Netanyahu departed from Israel to Washington, Mr. Obama delivered his infamous Arab Spring speech, which focused on a demand that Israel return to its indefensible pre-1967 borders with land swaps.

In November of 2011, an open microphone caught part of a private conversation with the President and French President Nicolas Sarkozy. Sarkozy said of the Israeli premier:

> I can't stand Netanyahu. He's a liar.

But rather than defend Israel, the President piled on. He said:

> You're tired of him; what about me? I have to deal with him every day.

In February of 2012, at a conference in Tunis, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was asked about Mr. Obama pandering to ''Zionist lobbies.'' She acknowledged that it was ''a fair question'' and went on to explain that during an election season ''there are comments made that certainly don't reflect our foreign policy.''

In 2014, during the Gaza conflict, the White House and the State Department criticized Israel for the deaths of Palestinians who were being used as human shields by Hamas. But far worse and far more suggestive of the President's true feelings was the White House's decision to try and use arms supplies as a pressure point against Israel.

In October of 2014, an anonymous administration official called Prime Minister Netanyahu ''a chicken——'' I can't even finish it.

That is what has happened up to this point. That is what has happened up to this point. What has happened now? An election just happened 2 days ago. The first thing the White House says is: You used a lot of divisive language in that election. That is saying a lot from someone who has been elected at least once, probably twice, on extremely divisive language.

But what about when Iran had a fraudulent election in 2009 and the people of Iran took to the streets to protest in the famous Green Revolution? You know what the White House said? We are not going to comment on that election because we are not going to interfere in the sovereignty of Iran. They will comment on the elections of an ally, calling the rhetoric of the election divisive. But when an enemy—which is what Iran is—has a fraudulent election and kills people who protest against it, we can't comment. We can't comment because that would be infringing on their sovereignty.

The other thing that has happened is the Prime Minister made a statement about how a two-state solution isn't possible given the current circumstances. What does the White House do? They jump up and say: Well, that means we may have to reconsider. We may have to go to the United Nations Security Council now and support a resolution, and that means not to use our veto authority to stop a resolution that calls on Israel to create a Palestinian State with 1967 borders.

Why would the Prime Minister of Israel say that, by the way? He is right; the conditions don't exist. Do you want to know why the conditions don't exist? First of all, let's go through the history of peace negotiations.

In 2000, at Camp David, Israel offered the Palestinian Authority nearly all of the West Bank, Eastern Jerusalem, and Gaza. The Palestinians said no. In 2000, Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon. Do you know what that is today? That is a place where they launch rockets against Israel.

In 2005, Israel withdrew from Gaza. Do you know what that is today? A place where they launch rockets from against Israel.

In 2008, Israel offered—again, to the Palestinian Authority—nearly all of the West Bank, nearly all of Judea and Samaria and Eastern Jerusalem. The Palestinian authority said no.

What about the Palestinian record? Let's begin with the fact that according to many reports, about 6 percent of the Palestinian budget is diverted to pay the salary of prisoners. That means the salary of terrorists, of people who have blown up centers and killed civilians, including Americans. They are being paid salaries and benefits, including with money from donors, such as the United States, Great Britain, Norway, and Denmark.

Here is another material on how the PA routinely depicts a world without Israel. This is from a Palestinian schoolbook:

> Palestine's war ended with a catastrophe that is unprecedented in history, when the Zionist gangs stole Palestine . . . and established the so-called State of Israel.

Or what about this particularly horrific expression of ideology which appeared in a Palestinian Authority daily as far back as 1998:

> The difference between Hitler and [British Foreign Minister] Balfour was simple: the former [Hitler] did not have colonies to send the Jews to, so he destroyed them, whereas Balfour . . . [turned] Palestine into his colony and sent the Jews. Balfour is Hitler with colonies, while Hitler is Balfour without colonies. They both wanted to get rid of the Jews...Zionism was crucial to the defense of the West, [by] ridding Europe of the burden of the Jews.

This is from a daily of the PA. These are the people with whom we are pressuring them to cut a peace deal.

What about this?

> The Palestinian Authority has named numerous locations and events after Palestinian terrorists responsible for killing Israeli civilians.

What about this? This opinion piece appeared in the New York Times in 2013:

> The Palestinian Authority's television and radio stations, public schools, summer camps, children's magazines and Web sites are being used to drive home four core messages. First, that the existence of a Jewish state . . . is illegitimate because there is no Jewish people and no Jewish history. . . . Second, that Jews and Zionists are horrible creatures that corrupt those in their vicinity. Third, that Palestinians must continue to struggle until the inevitable replacement of Israel by an Arab-Palestinian state. And fourth, that all forms of resistance are honorable and valid, even if some forms of violence are not always expedient. Instead of being schooled in the ''culture of peace,'' the next generation of Palestinians is being relentlessly fed a rhetorical diet that includes the idolization of terrorists, the demonization of Jews and the conviction that sooner or later Israel should cease to exist.

These are the people with whom this President wants to put pressure on them to cut a peace deal. I think Netanyahu is right. The conditions do not exist for a peace deal with people who teach their children that killing Jews is a glorious thing. The conditions for peace do not exist with a people—with a government, I should say, not a people. The people are victims of this government, the Palestinian Authority—not to mention Hamas, which teaches people that killing Jews is a glorious thing, that there is no such thing as a Jewish people, that any methods of destroying them is valid, that pays them salaries and benefits.

This President is making a historic mistake. Allies have differences. But for allies such as Israel, when you have a difference with them and it is public, it emboldens their enemies—to launch more rockets out of southern Lebanon and Gaza, to launch more terrorist attacks, to go to international forums and delegitimize Israel's right to exist. This is what they are doing.

This is a historic and tragic mistake. Israel is not a Republican or a Democratic issue. If this were a Republican President doing these things, I would give the exact same speech. In fact, I would be even angrier. This is outrageous. It is irresponsible, and it is dangerous. It betrays the commitment this Nation has made to the right of a Jewish State to exist in peace. No people on earth want peace more than the people of Israel. No people have suffered more at the hands of this violence and this terrorism than the people of Israel. They need America's support unconditionally. If there are differences, they need to be dealt with privately as we do with other allies.

More than anything else, they deserve to be treated with more respect, not less than the respect this President and this White House is giving the Supreme Leader of Iran. He would not dare say the things about the Supreme Leader of Iran now that he is saying about the Prime Minister of Israel because he wouldn't want to endanger his peace deal or his arms deal that he is working out with them.

I hope he will reconsider. I hope the bipartisan nature of our support of Israel is reinvigorated. I hope that once again this body, this Congress, and this government will recommit themselves to this extraordinarily important relationship, because if America doesn't stand with Israel, who would we stand with? If Israel—a democracy, a strong American ally on the international stage—is not worthy of our unconditional support, then what ally of ours around the world can feel safe in their alliance with us?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, today I want to comment on the recent election in Israel and the Obama administration's outrageous reaction to it. Two days ago Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's Likud Party won a decisive victory in the Israel election. For myself and on behalf of 3 million Arkansans, I want to offer hearty congratulations to Prime Minister Netanyahu. I have the greatest admiration for the Prime Minister's visionary and courageous statesmanship, as well as his service as a young man in his country's elite special operations forces. Prime Minister Netanyahu and his family have paid the highest price over the decades in the fight against the common enemies of Israel and the United States.

Yet let me also stress that the alliance between the United States and Israel is not an alliance for this or that Israeli statesman nor this or that Israeli political party. Nor, for that matter, does the alliance depend on whom or which party controls the White House or the Congress. Rather, it is an alliance between the American people and the Israeli people, between the ultimate defender of the West and the easternmost frontier of the West. Our alliance rests on our shared experiences and principles: our Judeo-Christian heritage, respect for the natural

rights of mankind, democratic self-government, market-based economics, and strong provision for our common defense. Israel's commitment to democratic elections demonstrated just this week an important distinction from many of their neighbors and why they are our closest ally in the region.

Apparently, President Obama harbors such deep-seated and irrational antipathy for Prime Minister Netanyahu that he is now willing to upend this decades-long alliance. President Obama's antagonism toward Prime Minister Netanyahu is longstanding and well known. Last year, for example, anonymous administration officials used a vulgar epithet to question Prime Minister Netanyahu's courage.

I will point out, as an aside, that anonymity is the Washington coward's shield, just as I am also compelled to point out that, so far as I know, neither the President nor his senior political aides served in our country's elite special operations forces, unlike Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Back to my main point, in the last 48 hours, more anonymous administration officials have suggested a fundamental rethinking of the United States-Israel alliance, citing Prime Minister Netanyahu's simple restatement of fact that there can be no Palestinian State until conditions change. The Palestinian Authority must, at a minimum, eject Hamas from its governing coalition, reclaim control of the Gaza Strip, accept a demilitarized eastern border in Judea and Samaria, and recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish State. As Prime Minister Netanyahu has said, if the Palestinians lay down their arms, there will be peace. But if Israel lays down its arms, there will be no Israel.

The Obama administration, though, has gone off the deep end and let their personal bitterness towards the Israeli Prime Minister drive their public foreign policy toward our closest ally. Here are just a few quotes from administration officials suggesting a fundamental change in our relationship with Israel and a willingness to abandon Israel at the United Nations.

One official said: ''We are signaling that [if the Israeli government's position is no longer to pursue a Palestinian state,] we're going to have to broaden the spectrum of options we pursue going forward.''

According to reports, that same official ''wouldn't rule out a modified American posture at the United Nations, where the U.S. has long fended off resolutions criticizing Israeli settlement activity and demanding its withdrawal from Palestinian territories.''

Another senior White House official said:

> The premise of our position internationally has been to support direct negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. We are now in a reality where the Israeli government no longer supports direct negotiations. Therefore we clearly have to factor that into our decisions going forward.

Finally, State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said:

> We're currently evaluating our approach. We're not going to prejudge what we would do if there was a UN action.

Some observers will dismiss these comments as the petulant response of a President and political operatives who didn't get their way in the elections this week. But there is something much more worrisome underway. While Prime Minister Netanyahu won a decisive victory, he still has just started assembling a governing majority coalition.

These kinds of quotes from Israel's most important ally could very well startle some of the smaller parties and their leaders with whom Prime Minister Netanyahu is currently in negotiations. This raises the question, of course, if the administration intends to undermine Prime Minister Netanyahu's efforts to assemble a coalition by suggesting a change to our longstanding policy of supporting Israel's position with the United Nations.

After all, if you were an elected leader in Israel's parliament, you surely would worry about the United States refusing to exercise its veto at the U.N. Security Council. Consider the United Nations' long and dark history of anti-Semitism.

The U.N. Human Rights Council has condemned Israel in 45 resolutions since its creation in 2006. In 2013, the U.N. General Assembly adopted a total of 21 resolutions singling out Israel for disapproval and just 4 resolutions for the rest of the world.

Fifty percent of all emergency special sessions of the General Assembly over the last six decades were convened to denounce Israel. Meanwhile, no emergency special session has been called for any other state in over 30 years. Given this history and the stakes here and abroad, let me speak bluntly so there can be no misunderstanding. Under no circumstances will I or this Congress allow the Obama administration to abandon Israel to the United Nations or any other international institution or to change fundamentally the terms of our alliance with Israel.

This administration's latest outrageous pronouncement is even more difficult to understand as they simultaneously coddle the terrorist regime in Iran. The people of Israel should know the American people remain in solidarity with them in their quest to exist peacefully with their neighbors and that we will not allow them to be thrown to the jackals at the United Nations—a characterization made famous by a past Member of this body, the late Daniel Patrick Moynihan. I call on all Members of this body, including my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, to join with me in one voice supporting our ally Israel against the jackals.

In the coming days—perhaps as soon as the debate over the budget resolution next week—I will propose legislation that reaffirms the longstanding policy of the United States to continue to defend Israel against attacks at the United Nations and other international agencies. I urge all Members of this body, including my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who have a long history of supporting Israel, to join me in supporting such legislation.

Further, should the United Nations, its subordinate agencies, the International Criminal Court or any other international agency take adverse action against Israel, I will consider introducing legislation to restrict U.S. funding for the offending agency. Finally, if the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations does not exercise the American veto against any anti-Israel resolution, I will also consider introducing similar legislation to restrict funding to the Ambassador's office.

For decades, the relationship between Israel and the United States has transcended political and personal differences. Our shared interests were enough to overcome any ideology or personal disagreement, but I fear mutual respect is of little concern to this administration. The President and all those senior officials around him should carefully consider the diplomatic and security consequences of their words. This Congress certainly will.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The Senator from Maryland.

SYRIAN WAR CRIMES ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the ongoing crisis in Syria. Sunday, March 15, marked the fourth anniversary of the beginning of the Syrian civil war.

Since this brutal war began, more than 3.8 million Syrians have fled Syria, 7.6 million have been displaced within Syria, and 12.2 million Syrians are in need of humanitarian assistance. Most tragically, more than 205,000 people have died as a result of the war. This past year was the deadliest year since the conflict began, with more than 76,000 dying in 2014 alone, including more than 3,500 children.

One thing has remained clear over the last 4 years—the war tactics employed in Syria by both government and opposition forces represent gross violations of human rights and fly in the face of internationally accepted rules of war.

The United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria has reported that the progovernment forces have murdered, tortured, assaulted, and raped civilians in Syria. Antigovernment groups have also engaged in murder, execution, torture, hostage-taking, and shelling of civilian neighborhoods. Medical workers and hospitals across Syria have also been targeted, but nowhere was the brutality of this war more evident than the events of August 21, 2013, when the Syrian Army, under the direction of President Assad, launched a chemical weapons attack in the Damascus suburbs killing 1,400 Syrians.

The United States, along with the international community, has a long tradition of upholding international norms, including holding accountable those guilty of crimes against humanity and war crimes. The international community cannot stand by and allow the murder of innocent men, women, and children to go unchallenged. He must immediately bring Assad and all the perpetrators of gross human rights violations in Syria to justice. This cannot wait another year.

Earlier this week, I reintroduced the Syrian War Crimes Accountability Act, along with my colleagues Senators RUBIO, MENENDEZ, SHAHEEN, and PETERS. This bipartisan legislation establishes a Syria-specific standard of reporting and accountability for crimes against humanity. The bill will require the U.S. State Department to report to relevant congressional committees on war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Syria. This would include an account of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the regime of President Bashar al-Assad and violent extremist groups and other combatants involved in the conflict.

Today, as I stand on the floor of the Senate, the violence is continuing unabated.

Some of my colleagues may be aware of a Syrian defector and photographer named Caesar. Caesar fled from Syria in 2013 with more than 55,000 photos documenting the torture and murder of more than 11,000 civilians. Last week, some of those photos were put on display at the United Nations.

We must shine a light on the atrocities that have been committed in Syria and demand accountability. Ignoring these violations sends a message to the global community that war crimes and crimes against humanity are tolerable. The Syrian people deserve much more than that.

On this fourth anniversary of the beginning of the Syrian war, we must recommit to supporting the Syrian people through humanitarian efforts and by holding those individuals and groups which are guilty of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity accountable for their atrocities.

I ask my colleagues to stand with the Syrian people and join me in supporting the Syrian War Crimes Accountability Act.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. President, I will also take time to urge my colleagues to immediately bring Loretta Lynch's nomination to the floor of the U.S. Senate to be the next Attorney General of the United States.

Ms. Lynch currently serves as the Senate-confirmed U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York. She has already been confirmed by the U.S. Senate. She served with great distinction as the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District.

I had the chance to visit with her last January and talk to her firsthand about her vision to be the next Attorney General of the United States. She is extremely impressive, very well qualified, and has the right values to be the Attorney General of the United States.

I will give a few examples. I know all of us are concerned about equal justice to the law. Well, Ms. Lynch has lived that through her own personal commitments. At Harvard Law School, she was a member of the Legal Aid Bureau, helping people who otherwise would not have been able to afford access to our legal system.

Ms. Lynch has a long and distinguished record of prosecuting terrorists, sex traffickers, organized crime cartels, corrupt politicians, and dangerous gangs. She has been endorsed by a wide variety of law enforcement agencies and individuals.

Put it this way: I have not heard anyone question her qualifications. I have not heard anyone question why she should not be confirmed to be the next Attorney General of the country.

Loretta Lynch's nomination has been pending on the Senate floor as long as the five most recent Attorneys General combined. If we take five of the most recent Attorneys General and add all the time it took for their nominations to be confirmed, Loretta Lynch is now exceeding that. That is not fair.

President Obama is entitled to have his team in place, and we have a responsibility to vote on his nominations. Let's do the right thing and take up this nomination, debate it, and then have Senators vote up or down, not maybe, on her nomination. We owe it to Ms. Lynch, the employees of the Justice Department, and the American people to have a newly designated Attorney General in place as the Nation's chief law enforcement officer and top defender of Americans' constitutional rights.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BISHOP GORMAN HIGH SCHOOL 60TH DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to honor the 60th anniversary of Bishop Gorman High School in Las Vegas, NV.

In 1954, Bishop Gorman High School opened as the first Catholic high school in Southern Nevada. I congratulate the institution on 60 years of leading our country in first-rate education while positively implementing Catholic values.

Bishop Gorman High School has graduated more than 9,000 students and currently has a 100 percent graduation rate and a college bound rate of 96 percent, making Bishop Gorman a national leader in college preparatory education. The school is equipped with an impressively experienced and credited faculty, with nearly 70 percent holding advanced degrees. The administration and the faculty's dedication to providing excellent education in a Catholic setting, in addition to a low student-teacher ratio, has contributed to Bishop Gorman's success and helped ensure that its students can reach their full potential.

The school takes pride in providing its students with a well-rounded education that includes strong academic principles, faith, and competitive athletic opportunities. Over the past 60 years, students have won 97 State athletic championships and received State and national recognition in academics, fine arts, and extracurricular activities.

Bishop Gorman High School also gives back to the local community and the State. Every year they organize multiple service events, and this past year, art students designed a beautiful courtyard for a transitional home in Las Vegas. Additionally, the National Honor Society students volunteered each week at a local food bank.

I applaud Bishop Gorman High School President John Kilduff and Principal Kevin Kiefer for their strong leadership and recognize this year's Knight of the Gaels honoree, Jack Raftery, Sr. I am pleased that through your joint efforts and the dedication of those before you, this remarkable institution has been a part of our community for 60 years. Best wishes for continued success, and congratulations on this great achievement.

BLACK WOMEN'S HISTORY WEEK

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I request that the U.S. government officially recognizes the last week in March as Black Women's History Week. During the week of March 23, as part of Women's History Month and in honor of the U.N. declaration of 2015 as the decade of Afro descendants, this week marks the perfect occasion on which to begin an annual recognition and celebration of Black women's history and contributions to American society.

Black women have long gone above and beyond the call of duty in their contributions to American society through civic engagement, high voter turnout, and stepping up as leaders and bulwarks in their communities. Even in the face of grave oppression throughout our Nation's history, Black women have continued to stand strong