RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

The Senator from South Dakota.

IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT REVIEW ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, on April 2, President Obama announced that a framework had been reached for a nuclear agreement with Iran. If all goes according to plan—which hasn't happened often during these repeatedly prolonged negotiations—it means the White House would finish negotiating an agreement sometime in June. But the question remains as to what type of agreement the negotiations will finally produce.

Any deal with Iran needs to achieve one thing—one thing—and that is to prevent permanently Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. But the framework the President has unveiled seems unlikely to achieve that goal.

Far from eliminating Iran's nuclear capabilities, the framework does not shut down a single nuclear facility in the country. It doesn't destroy a single centrifuge. It doesn't stop research and development on existing centrifuges. It doesn't eliminate Iran's missile development programs. And it allows Iran to keep a substantial part of its existing stockpile of enriched uranium. It is no surprise that Members of both parties are deeply concerned the final agreement will not be effective in preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

I don't need to tell anyone why Iran's possessing a nuclear weapon is such a dangerous prospect. First of all, Iran, as we all know, is a state sponsor of terrorism. Practically speaking, that means Iran provides support and funding to organizations that consider the slaughter of innocent civilians to be an acceptable negotiating tactic, which has kept millions of ordinary men, women, and children in the Middle East from living in stability and peace.

Iran's plan for the Middle East includes its stated goal of wiping our ally Israel off the map, which should tell us all we need to know about that country's commitment to peace in the region. Meanwhile, at home, Iran embraces the same violence and oppression it spreads abroad. Iran's Government is hostile to freedom of any kind. Thousands of Iran's citizens have been tortured, imprisoned, and executed for daring to stand up for their human rights. This is not a regime that can be trusted with a nuclear weapon.

In addition to the danger inherent in a regime such as Iran having nuclear weapons at its disposal, Iran's acquiring such a weapon could likely start a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. Right now, we are witnessing a quasi-proxy war in Yemen, with Iran supporting the Houthis and a Saudi Arabia-led coalition bombing the Houthis and supporting the ousted government. Imagine this scenario if both major powers had nuclear weapons at their disposal?

There is also the other great danger in Iran's acquiring nuclear weapons—a chance it could give a nuclear weapon to a terrorist organization. Imagine a situation in which a nuclear weapon fell into the hands of such organizations. The consequences of that would be unthinkable.

This week the Senate is considering the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act negotiated by Senators CORKER and CARDIN. The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act would ensure that the American people's concerns about a nuclear deal are heard by providing for congressional review of any agreement the President reaches with Iran.

Specifically, the bill would require the President to submit the agreement to Congress and prevent him from waiving any congressional sanctions on Iran until Congress reviews the deal.

Congress passed sanctions that eventually brought the Iranian economy to its knees and drove the Iranian Government to the negotiating table. The only reason—the only reason—Iran is cooperating at all on a nuclear agreement is because it wants to see those sanctions lifted. This bill would ensure the sanctions could only be lifted after congressional review.

The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act would also make sure any agreement with Iran is verified and enforced. Under the terms of this legislation, every 90 days the President would be required to provide Congress with confirmation that Iran is complying with the agreement.

The bill also includes reporting requirements on Iran's record on human rights and support for terrorism and any ballistic missile testing it is conducting.

I plan to offer an amendment to this legislation to require the Secretary of State to investigate whether the International Atomic Energy Agency, which would be in charge of inspections under any agreement, would have access to military bases if they were deemed to be suspicious sites.

Recent reports have indicated that the Iranian military is hostile to any inspection of military bases. General Hussein Salami, deputy head of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, told Iranian media, ''They [the inspectors] will not even be permitted to inspect the most normal military site in their dreams.'' Well, given that attitude, are we really supposed to trust Iran to fully comply with a nuclear agreement?

While I remain concerned about the framework the President has unveiled, one bright spot in this debate has been seeing Democrats and Republicans working together to ensure that any deal with Iran is verifiable, enforceable, and accountable and promotes security and stability in the region and around the globe.

This kind of bipartisanship has been more the norm in the Senate lately. When Republicans were elected last November, we promised we would get Washington working again for American families. That was not a campaign slogan. That was a commitment, and we have been delivering on our promise.

Since Republicans took control of the Senate in January, we have passed 13 bipartisan bills: legislation to approve the Keystone Pipeline, a bill to prevent suicides among veterans, reauthorization of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program, legislation to give law enforcement new tools to fight human trafficking and provide support for trafficking victims, and the first significant bipartisan reform of Medicare in years.

Even the media is paying attention. On April 26, CBS published an article entitled ''Some Good News Out of Washington, For a Change.'' On April 24, an NPR headline asked: ''Has the Senate Found It's More Fun to be Functional?'' And a USA TODAY headline from April 20 noted: ''New Study Suggests a 'Healthier' Congress.'' It argues that we are getting things done again and working again and functioning here in the Senate.

The best way to solve the challenges facing our Nation is for Democrats and Republicans to come together and to develop solutions. We have been doing that for the past 4 months here in the Senate, and that is what we are doing on this crucial Iran legislation.

A nuclear-armed Iran is a threat to the safety, security, and stability of the globe, and I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to ensure that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon.

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

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

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1191, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1191) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

Corker/Cardin amendment No. 1140, in the nature of a substitute.

AMENDMENT NO. 1179 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1140

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I call up the Corker-Cardin amendment, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Tennessee [Mr. CORKER], for himself and Mr. CARDIN, proposes an amendment numbered 1179 to amendment No. 1140.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require submission of all Persian text included in the agreement)

On page 2, line 13, insert ''\, and specifically including any agreed Persian text of such agreement, related materials, and annexes'' after ''and annexes''.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, this amendment simply requires that, alongside the English text of any final agreement, the President submit to Congress the official Persian text of any final agreement, including the related materials and annexes.

We all have seen the controversy surrounding the discrepancies between the American factsheet and the Iranian factsheet. This agreement is too important to rely on secondhand interpretations of the Senate. In order for Congress to adequately evaluate any agreement, we have to see what both sides believe this agreement is, and that requires the Persian text of the agreement.

This is a commonsense amendment. I thank Senator CARDIN for joining me in this amendment, and not unprecedented in any way. In fact, we just recently received a transmission of the China 123 agreement, which included the Chinese text.

I yield to my friend, Senator CARDIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator CORKER on this first amendment being offered. We have used the same process we used in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. There are several Members who have brought this to our attention; that it is important, in reviewing the agreement—assuming agreement is reached by Congress—that we have at our disposal the documents being used. We expect we will have certainly an English version, but there could be information in other languages, including Farsi. So it is important we have the original documents being used so we can review and determine ourselves all the details of the agreement.

So that is the purpose of this. This is a bipartisan amendment. We believe it strengthens the underlying purpose of this bill, which is to set up an orderly way for Congress to review a potential agreement reached between the United States and our negotiating partners and Iran—have an opportunity to review and have the options of either taking no action or dealing with an approval or disapproval or dealing with the sanctions, since we imposed the sanctions. So I think it strengthens the underlying bill, but more importantly it is a process we should use.

If I might, the bill now is open for amendment, but I would urge my colleagues to understand how the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has brought forward a bill that got a 19-to-0 vote in the committee—because we recognize stopping Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state is so important, we cannot be distracted by other issues. So we focused on that issue.

As I said earlier, we have a lot of other problems with Iran. Iran sponsors terrorism. Iran has interfered with its neighbors and is continuing to do that. Iran has a horrible record on human rights.

So as I started to look through the amendments that were filed—they haven't been made pending but have been filed—I see a whole host of amendments that deal with issues that aren't really involved in this bill in stopping Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state. They would add certification requirements on Iran not participating in terrorism or its ballistic missile program or its human rights record or its interference with the sovereignty of other countries or the return of U.S. citizens who are improperly being held.

Every Member of this body agrees that Iran needs to respond to those issues, and we have tools available to deal with that. We have sanctions, regimes that deal with human rights violations, sponsoring terrorism, ballistic missile programs. This bill deals with stopping Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state.

Now what would happen if any of those amendments were approved, if we had to have a certification. The President could not make that certification. So one of two things happens: It is a poison pill that kills this bill, so we lose our opportunity to review or it blows up negotiations, and then the United States is alone, without any international support, because we blew it up in stopping Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state, making it much less likely that we will stop Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state. That is why Senator GRAHAM said the only people who will celebrate a poison pill getting on this bill will be Iran.

So I urge my colleagues to understand what is at stake. This is a very important bill.

What Senator CORKER and I urge Senators to do is, if they have amendments to file, talk to us. That is how we did it in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Talk to us. Let's see whether we can work out an amendment, in an orderly way, to consider those amendments.

That is what we want to do, so we can use our time on the floor in consideration of amendments in the most constructive way, that will lead to a bill being approved by the same large vote we had in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, so we use the process for amendments similar to what this bill, S. 615, does for a congressional review of an agreement and the way the Senate Foreign Relations Committee did its work to get a 19-to-0 vote.

I thank my chairman for his extraordinary leadership. I thank the Presiding Officer who was very helpful in this process. I hope we will be able to proceed in that direction.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Maryland.

I agree. We have reached out to numbers of people who have amendments and have asked them to come down to the floor and talk with us. I know a number of our folks are traveling around the country focused on other things at present. We have reached out to them to get back with us and talk about some of the language.

I say to my friend from Maryland that I appreciate his openness to the numbers of amendments we are now looking at. I know at lunch today he will talk to his caucus a little bit about them and we will talk to ours.

I look forward to a robust process. But, again, we have to have people who, if they want to call up an amendment—they need to come down, if they will, and talk with us and let us work through the process.

I thank the Senator for his comments.

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

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

WELCOMING PRIME MINISTER ABE

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I rise to welcome the Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe to Congress and to speak to the importance of United States-Japan relations and the future of the Asia-Pacific region.

Tomorrow is a momentous occasion. For the first time ever, our country will welcome the leader of Japan to speak before a joint meeting of Congress.

For over 2½ centuries, our Nations have been intimately linked by trade and commerce. In 1853, Commodore Matthew Perry waited with his ships on Japanese shores to deliver a letter from President Millard Fillmore to Japan's Emperor on November 13, 1852, which said in part:

I send you this public letter by Commodore Matthew C. Perry, an officer of the highest rank in the navy of the United States, and commander of the squadron now visiting Your imperial majesty's dominions.

I have directed Commodore Perry to assure your imperial majesty that I entertain the kindest feelings toward your majesty's person and government, and that I have no other object in sending him to Japan but to propose to your imperial majesty that the United States and Japan should live in friendship.

Thus, our Nations embarked on a path and relationship that would change the course of world history. On July 29, 1858, the United States and

Japan concluded the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, and in 1860 Japan dispatched its first diplomats to Washington, DC. They were the very first Japanese diplomats to visit a foreign power in 200 years.

Historians have often referred to our opening with Japan as an extension of our own Nation's Manifest Destiny which spread the American people and values across the West, including my home State of Colorado.

In 1911, President William Howard Taft further advanced our ties by concluding the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation with Japan. In World War I, Japan sided with the allies.

On March 26, 1912, a gift of 3,020 cherry blossom trees arrived in our Nation's Capital—a symbol of United States-Japanese friendship that we witness every spring as we walk by or drive by the Tidal Basin and other landmarks in Washington. But we must never forget the dark pages in our history. We must never forget Pearl Harbor, the day that will live in infamy. We must never forget Iwo Jima, Saipan, Guadalcanal, and the bloody battles in Okinawa.

This war changed our Nation forever. Every day we must remember the sacrifice of the greatest generation that prevailed in that epic, great civilizational conflict. Without them, this Nation would not be what it is today. Without them, this Nation may not have endured. We never lost sight of perspective of why we fought. As Imperial Japan surrendered aboard the USS *Missouri*, GEN Douglas MacArthur offered the following:

> It is my earnest hope and indeed the hope of all mankind that from this solemn occasion a better world shall emerge out of the blood and carnage of the past—a world founded upon faith and understanding—a world dedicated to the dignity of man and the fulfillment of his most cherished wish—for freedom, tolerance, and justice.

Japan's destruction following World War II was nearly complete. Out of that rubble of tragedy emerged the great partnership between our two nations. On April 19, 1951, General MacArthur went before Congress and declared in his farewell address:

> The Japanese people, since the war, have undergone the greatest reformation recorded in modern history. With a commendable will, eagerness to learn, and marked capacity to understand, they have, from the ashes left in the war's wake, erected in Japan an edifice dedicated to the supremacy of individual liberty and personal dignity; and in the ensuing process there has been created a truly representative government committed to the advance of political morality, freedom of economic enterprise, and social justice.

As Japan took on the task of arduously rebuilding its society and economy, our friendship and our relationship blossomed. Perhaps helping in that relationship, of course, is a shared national pastime, baseball. It arrived in Japan in the 19th century and was already a thriving sport by the time the postwar recovery had begun.

Yogi Berra, the New York Yankees' great, visited Japan in 1953 in the midst of this rebuilding process. His love of the game won the affection of millions, and he traveled the country demonstrating his skills behind the plate. Still, many of us may pause to wonder if this is the place—a nation haunted by such recent trials of war and a land struggling to regain its footing in the world, a once powerful country desperate to turn the page in history—where Yogi Berra first uttered his memorable phrase: The future ain't what it used to be.

With the United States firmly at her side, Japan rose again. Japan today is the world's third largest economy and the fourth largest trading partner for the United States. Millions of Americans for generations have bought iconic Japanese products, from Sony televisions to Toyota automobiles, to Toshiba laptops.

In the 1980s, former Senate majority leader and later Ambassador to Japan Mike Mansfield would describe the United States-Japan relationship as the most important bilateral relationship in the world, bar none. The United States-Japan alliance remains the backbone of security and stability in Asia. Approximately 53,000 U.S. military personnel are now stationed in the Japanese islands, both onshore and offshore. Together, with our Japanese partners, we work daily to confront the security challenges in the region and to ensure peace and stability.

As the challenges in the region are evolving, so, too, must the security relationship between the United States and Japan. The Japanese leadership is currently taking necessary steps to change its post-World War II defense posture in order to meet the traditional and emerging challenges in the region. The revised United States-Japan defense cooperation guidelines, announced yesterday, signify a new phase in our relationship and Japan's emergence as security leader in the region.

I want the American people to understand the importance of these developments. It is due to U.S. military presence and the steadfast commitment to our allies that we have avoided a land war in East Asia for generations.

Distinguished political scientist Joseph Nye may have put it best when he said: Security is like oxygen—you tend not to notice it until you begin to lose it, but once that occurs there is nothing else that you will think about.

Our presence in the region has given our allies the breathing space to rebuild and stave off aggression, and now they are stepping up to the plate by increasingly sharing that responsibility with the United States.

This is also a historic economic moment for the Asia-Pacific region. The United States and Japan are leading the way on concluding one of the most ambitious trade deals ever undertaken, the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Eleven Pacific nations from Malaysia to New Zealand and Brunei to Vietnam are actively working to tear down barriers to trade that have stifled access to markets far too long. TPP's reach encompasses nearly 40 percent—nearly 40—percent of all global trade and trillions of dollars in economic activity.

TPP will set the standard for a new era of economic relationships with Asia, and the United States and Japan are leading the way. We must conclude this landmark agreement as soon as possible, and I am encouraged by the progress we have made in Congress to advance this historic pact, but we must look at the TPP as just one step forward in our commitment to the region, not the final solution.

Despite the crises of the day in the Middle East or Europe, where the United States does and should play an important role, our Nation's strategic future lies in Asia.

Consider the following estimates from the Asian Development Bank:

By 2050, Asia will account for over half of the population and over half of the world's gross domestic product.

Asia's middle class will rise and increase to a staggering 3 billion people.

Per capita GDP income in the region will rise to around $40,000, making it similar to the Europe of today.

We cannot miss the opportunity to be a part of this important opportunity and transformation. Working with Japan and other regional partners, we must ensure that our policies strengthen existing friendships and build new partnerships that will be critical to U.S. national security and economic well-being for generations to come.

This administration's pivot to Asia or rebalance policy, which builds on the work that began under previous administrations, is a sensible approach to realizing these goals. But I am concerned, however, with the pace and focus and the consistency of the implementation of the rebalance. The administration, this administration and the next one, must ensure that this important policy of engagement is pursued vigorously at all levels—whether that is the military, diplomacy or civilian fronts—in order for the rebalance to actually achieve its stated and strategic objectives. Moving in fits and starts is not good policy, whether that is for the economy or foreign relations. Every moment of hesitation and idleness invites evermore challenges and missed opportunities. Doubt is never the basis of a long-term, strong relationship.

Our partners in the region must know each and every day that the United States is here to stay. We still face grave threats in the Asia-Pacific region as North Korea marches on with their nuclear program and belligerence toward the free world. The growing challenges of nuclear proliferation, cyber security threats, and the destabilizing territorial disputes in the South and East Asian seas requires that now more than ever the United States and Japan are vigilant and united with our allies in our efforts to maintain regional prosperity and security.

As the Prime Minister delivers his historic address tomorrow, it is my hope that he delivers the message that the promise of the future in the region, bolstered by an alliance with the United States, is a more powerful force than the painful history of the past.

We must never forget that colonialism and militarism caused untold anguish and destruction in the region in the 20th century. But as demonstrated by the strength of the United States-Japan relations following those dark pages of history, it is my sincerest wish that our friends in the region can establish a viable path forward and overcome this difficult past to focus on building a better future.

America's new century in the Asia-Pacific region has arrived. But as we welcome Prime Minister Abe and celebrate our friendship, we must remember this is only the first inning of this ball game. We must continue to work toward the goal that General MacArthur had stated aboard the USS *Missouri* on September 2, 1945:

> . . . a better world shall emerge out of the blood and carnage of the past—a world founded upon faith and understanding—a world dedicated to the dignity of man and the fulfillment of his most cherished wish—for freedom, tolerance and justice.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, 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. CARDIN. 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. CARDIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator GARDNER for his leadership as chair of the East Asia and Pacific subcommittee. I am still technically the ranking member of that subcommittee, but under my new responsibilities I have not had the same amount of time. I want to thank the Senator for the work he is doing, for doing the rebalanced Asia. We know how important Asia is to the United States. With the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Abe, being here this week, it is an opportunity to underscore the important relationship between Japan and the United States. I really wish to thank the Senator for the way he has led the subcommittee and how he has worked to point out the important issues we have on maritime security and how we have to work together to make sure responsible action takes place and that we don't have a circumstance that could get out of control and could affect not only the security of some of our allies but also the maritime shipping areas.

There are so many issues we are working on with our ally Japan, and this week we have a chance really to strengthen those relationships. We will have an opportunity to talk to the Prime Minister, and I look forward to continuing to work with the Senator from Colorado in this very important part of the world, Japan.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

CORINTHIAN COLLEGES

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, it has been nearly 1 year since Corinthian Colleges, Inc., began its death spiral—falling under the weight of its own wrongdoing. Corinthian Colleges defrauded students, defrauded taxpayers, lied to accreditors, lied to the Federal Government, and on Sunday, this for-profit college, Corinthian Colleges, announced it would close its remaining 28 campuses—campuses in California, Oregon, Hawaii, Arizona, and New York. So, finally, Corinthian has collapsed.

We reflect on this disaster and ask a basic critical question: Why did it take this long given the long litany of violations to finally stop the flow of hundreds of millions of dollars—Federal tax dollars—to Corinthian Colleges, and equally important, how many Corinthian disasters lie ahead in the for-profit college and university industry?

There are certainly more questions we need to ask of the Department of Education about how it handled this case and how it must be more aggressive in the future to stop violations earlier, especially to prevent the students at these for-profit education companies from suffering an experience similar to Corinthian.

There will be more to come on that in the weeks and months ahead, but today I wish to focus on what is next for the students who attended these Corinthian campuses. We know this for-profit college and university industry pretty well. Ask any high school student in America to go online and to search a word, such as college or university, and watch what happens. As soon as they get to any kind of directory of Web sites, they will start seeing the ads for the for-profit colleges and universities. Some of the names are pretty obvious and well known. The largest of all is University of Phoenix. The next largest is DeVry University, out of the city of Chicago, and the next largest is Kaplan, an entity that was once owned by the Washington Post and now is on its own.

These for-profit colleges and universities descend on students, as well as on those who graduated from high school, imploring them to sign up for an education online—to sign up for a for-profit college. It will be so easy. They can do this online and get their degree. It will be a snap. That is what Corinthian did for years.

I know that with the news of the closure, students who signed up for Corinthian and went to school there woke up wondering what is next. Their college just disappeared, but their student debt didn't disappear. They signed up for these loans to go to this worthless school, and now the school has disappeared and the debt is still there.

There is a Federal law that can help these students. The Higher Education Act gives students who attended a school such as Corinthian—within 120 days of its closure—the ability to discharge their Federal student loans. I am renewing my call to the Department of Education to reach out directly to the thousands of students who have been exploited by Corinthian Colleges and to provide discharge applications to these students and give them clear, upfront information about how transferring their credits to another school may impact their ability to discharge their loans.

If a student transfers these Corinthian credits, which have limited value, to another school, they likely cannot discharge the loan they took out at Corinthian. So a student has to make a choice. The notice that the Department of Education sent to students yesterday is unacceptable. It leaves students to navigate through a series of links to get more information and it glosses over the most basic right of a student to discharge the student loans from bankrupt Corinthian Colleges.

Federal regulations clearly state the Secretary of Education's responsibility when a school such as Corinthian closes. According to the law, it says: ''After confirming the date of a school's closure, the Secretary identifies any Direct Loan borrower (or student on whose behalf a parent borrowed) who appears to have enrolled at the school on the school closure date or to have withdrawn not more than 120 days prior to the closure date.''

It goes on to say: ''If the borrower's current address is known, the Secretary mails the borrower a discharge application and an explanation of the qualifications and procedures for obtaining a discharge.''

The law is pretty clear. It is up to the Secretary of Education—the same agency that published an accreditation for this failed school, the same agency which sent the loan forms for students to sign up for loans. That same agency now has an obligation under the law to tell these students there is a way out.

Do you know what the average tuition is for a 2-year degree at the failed Corinthian Colleges? About $40,000. Imagine if this were your son or daughter. They just went through 2 years of school and have $40,000 in debt, and the college they are attending, Corinthian Colleges, just essentially went bankrupt, and now they find out people are laughing at them when they show their diploma from Corinthian Colleges.

What is wrong with this picture? A young person, 2 or 3 years out of high school, now has $40,000 worth of debt or more and nothing to show for it.

Now is not the time for the Department to be concerned with the cost to taxpayers of discharging this debt. That is an important issue, and we will take it on later. The time for that was really over the last 12 months when the Department of Education kept Corinthian alive by pumping in hundreds of millions of dollars to keep their doors open when they were headed for bankruptcy. Now is the time to focus on the students, particularly the students in the States I mentioned earlier. They need the relief from this student debt.

The Department has also been doing something which I really want to call them out on. You know what they are suggesting to the students who have just gone through this miserable experience at the for-profit, failed, bankrupt Corinthian Colleges? They are suggesting that they can transfer to another for-profit college. What are they thinking?

Students should be warned if they use their Corinthian credits to transfer to another institution, they will likely not be eligible for discharge.

I have a few examples of the schools the U.S. Department of Education suggested that the Corinthian Colleges students transfer their credits to and still keep their debt from Corinthian. ITT Tech is one example. We see their ads everywhere, don't we? What we don't see in their ads is the fact that they are being sued by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Sixteen different State attorneys general are investigating ITT Tech, and they are on the Department of Education's heightened cash monitoring list. Our Department is recommending that these students transfer to this school? What are they thinking?

Here is another example: Le Cordon Bleu and International Academy of Design and Technology—powerful names. What we don't see in all of their ads is that their parent company, Career Education Corporation, is under investigation by 17 different State attorneys general and on the Department of Education's heightened cash monitoring list. And our Department of Education is suggesting that the students at the failed Corinthian Colleges—why don't you pick up a culinary degree from Le Cordon Bleu. Maybe it will stay in business.

Here is another example: the Art Institutes and Argosy University. Argosy University—I ran into their signs in Chicago last week, and I could not help but think how many students are lured into believing Argosy University is something more than it really is. It is a for-profit college and university.

Incidentally, for the record, the parent company, Education Management Corporation is being sued by the U.S. Department of Justice and investigated by 17 State attorneys general. They are also on the Department of Education's heightened cash monitoring list. This is another school that the Department of Education suggested that Corinthian Colleges students transfer to.

Westwood College, one of the most infamous in the Chicagoland area, is being sued by the Illinois attorney general for deceptive recruiting practices. They were suggested to Corinthian Colleges students to transfer to by the Department of Education.

DeVry is under investigation by the Federal Trade Commission and by two State attorneys general. The University of Phoenix's parent company is being investigated by two State attorneys general. Kaplan is under investigation by three State attorneys general.

Has the Department of Education learned nothing? How in good faith can they tell these Corinthian students—who just had their college disappear and are sitting on a pile of debt—that these are viable transfer options for their students?

Last summer the Department assured me they would not sell Corinthian campuses to companies being investigated. They didn't want the students to be placed in double jeopardy. Why now will the Department accept that outcome for these students?

A move such as this leads me to the sad conclusion that the Department of Education is out of touch with the reality of the danger of students signing up at for-profit colleges and universities.

I want to say a word about the students who don't qualify for the clear relief I mentioned under the Federal law—the closed-school discharge. I joined with Senator ELIZABETH WARREN and others to call on the Department of Education to provide meaningful debt relief for all students wronged by Corinthian. We believe the fraud perpetrated by Corinthian should constitute a defense for repayment to students. The Department should provide clear guidelines on how students can assert their claims. These students need it and deserve it.

Senator WARREN and I will meet with Secretary Duncan and Undersecretary Mitchell later this week.

While Corinthian's fraudulent behavior has left tens of thousands of students in financial desperate straits, the company's leaders have been cashing in for years.

The CEO of the failed Corinthian corporation, which received 80 to 90 percent of its revenue directly from the Federal Treasury through student loans, made over $3 million in 2013. The vice presidents didn't do quite as well. They were only paid $1 million. The list goes on.

In September of last year, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau sued Corinthian. This goes back a few months. They sued them for illegal predatory lending schemes by luring students with false job promises, saddling them with high-cost debt, and harassing them when they were unable to repay their loans. It turned out that only 25 percent of the students coming out of Corinthian Colleges were able to repay their loans—25 percent. Why? Because the tuition is so high, the diploma is so worthless.

Why are we complicit? Why is the U.S. Department of Education not blowing the whistle on this school and every other school that is exploiting students all across America?

At the end of the day, the losers are not only the students who have wasted their time and ended up with debt, the losers are the taxpayers of America—the taxpayers of America, who provide funds for the student loans and unfortunately do not have the protection they deserve in this situation.

I call on the Department of Education to make their highest priority the casualties and victims of this Corinthian College.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, the Senator from Indiana now has the floor. I thank the Senator from Illinois and the Senator from Indiana for working with each other to go about this in a timely way.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Madam President, I rise to express my support for the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act—the only measure now before us that will prevent President Obama from having a free and independent hand to conclude a flawed agreement with the Government of Iran.

The White House and the Ayatollahs in Iran must know that the Congress will not tolerate a bad deal secretly struck behind our backs and without our approval. The Corker-Menendez bill now before us and being managed by Senator CORKER and Senator CARDIN on the floor needs our engagement and is the only vehicle we have to send that message. Thus, the passage of this review act is absolutely essential. Its passage will send a message more important than any amendments, no matter how correct or well-conceived, if those amendments would doom the bill, mute the message, and deprive us of this vital role.

We have come to a moment of decision in this Chamber. It is clear at last that we are finally close to imposing a vital congressional role in evaluating any deal—something President Obama previously had been determined to avoid.

I have long been concerned that the President is determined to implement his version of a deal with Iran on his own, circumventing Congress. This is not acceptable. Resolving this issue with Iran is the most significant foreign policy and security challenge of our age. It cannot be pursued simply by the President potentially overreaching his constitutional authority, longing for a legacy and desperate for a deal. If

he fears that a supermajority in Congress would reject this deal if it is presented to us, then he has struck the wrong deal.

Fortunately, the right, statesmanlike Presidential support was finally provided after the Foreign Relations Committee voted on an entirely bipartisan basis to give Congress a role in this matter. The question is whether the President will accept the decision made by the Congress as to whether the agreement with Iran achieves the goal of denying Iran nuclear weapons capability.

The successful congressional strategy that brought us to that result in committee required the sponsors of this bill—the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act—to keep the focus on its core purpose. While there were many amendments considered or offered in the committee that could have improved the bill, the Corker-Menendez bill passed by the Foreign Relations Committee is a necessary first step in achieving the goal of congressional engagement in one of the issues, if not the most important issue of our time.

It is now clear that the most important goal at this stage of the misguided and badly managed negotiations with the Iranian regime is that Congress must have a determining voice in accepting or rejecting any deal that is presented to us. With passage of the Corker-Menendez legislation, we will be able to spell out with precision what sort of an Iran deal might be acceptable, what concessions may be going too far, and what the consequences would be if Iran backs away from acceptable conditions.

I wish to emphasize and define the worst possible outcome that could happen. If our effort to impose a congressional role fails—if this bill is defeated or the promised veto is upheld—Congress will have become a spent force. Iran will see that Congress is no longer a matter of concern for them. The Iranians will have a green light to continue negotiations with a weak administration desperate for a deal—any deal. The Iranians can play their hand to maximum advantage without concern for the views of Congress or even the views of the American people we represent. At the same time, the Administration would be free to give as much ground as necessary to secure a deal that apparently they so desperately desire. They will be constrained by nothing coming from this Chamber or an impotent Congress.

To avoid that outcome, we must focus on keeping the bipartisan majority on this bill solid and robust. So I am cosponsoring, supporting, and will be voting for the Corker-Menendez bill. This is a necessary intermediate step, as I have said, toward a much more crucial vote on the Iran deal itself, where our focus needs to be.

Once we have secured a congressional role by passing this bill, we then must use the next 2 months to analyze the outlined agreement that came out of the negotiations in Switzerland a couple of weeks ago, identify its weaknesses, and determine how we should best proceed.

As it now stands, as outlined by the so-called political framework, I am profoundly unhappy with what has been agreed to by the Obama Administration. If this is what we see when the result of the final negotiations is presented to us, I will vote against it and do my best to make sure others do as well. We in Congress must make sure the White House knows what we require if a deal is to be accepted.

This is not a recent or uninformed position on my part. I have been deeply involved in this issue for the past several years, and I have been concerned about the growing threat of Iran since at least 2001. Back then, when I was our Ambassador in Berlin, the Embassy's biggest challenge was to persuade Germany to support the invasion of Iraq. But the Israeli Ambassador to Germany at the time, Shimon Stein, kept talking to me about what they conceived to be the real, ultimate threat. He convinced me that an even greater threat would be coming from Iran and that this threat would continue to grow until we took it seriously and dealt with it effectively.

After returning to the United States, I cochaired with Senator Chuck Robb the original Iran project at the Bipartisan Policy Center. We focused deeply on the Iran nuclear issue and offered detailed analysis and recommendations on how we believed it should be dealt with. Our task force members included such experts as Ash Carter, now Secretary of Defense; Ambassador DENNIS ROSS, one of the key and most experienced ambassadors and foreign policy analysts—particularly in the Middle East; a number of key generals who had served in the military on Middle Eastern affairs; and a number of other names, including Jack Keane and others.

Our reports covered all of the elements of a deal that is acceptable and could best meet, we thought, our national security needs. These included all aspects of fissile material production and how that activity must be limited and controlled; activities at the various nuclear facilities and the type of research and development that must be curtailed; the issue of Iranian stockpiles and their disposition; nuclear weapons design activities in the past that need to be revealed and stopped; missile development work; the critical need of adequate inspection regimes and compliance verification measures; and, importantly, the duration of any future deal.

We also examined the requirements of a necessary and credible military option that must back up any diplomatic efforts and sanctions pressure to achieve the right result. It was a last resort, and it was there to apply the pressure needed, along with ever-ratcheting sanctions, if Iran continued to defy the wishes of the United Nations, the wishes of the United States, and the wishes of the free world and all of those who had spoken up about the deadly consequences of the Iranian pursuit of nuclear weapons.

Since that early involvement and throughout that period, I supported negotiations as one of the essential tools to solve this problem. I want to state that again. This is not a rush to war. This is doing everything we can to prevent a war, to prevent conflict. I have ardently supported negotiations to try to achieve the necessary result combined with sanctions, putting ever-increasing pressure on the Iranian regime to achieve the desired result, with a backup—not taking off the table the use of force if necessary but only if necessary, only if everything else failed, because four Presidents, including our current President, have stated that Iranian possession of nuclear weapons is simply unacceptable. The United Nations has passed numerous resolutions to that effect. Other nations have said the same. Yet, now, we are looking at a framework that might allow Iran to break all of the commitments it made and all of the assertions we made.

We need a solution that guarantees our security and assures that Iran will never have nuclear weapons. If the White House cannot be persuaded to bring us a deal that does that, they should not bring us a deal at all.

Unfortunately, it is clear to me from the framework agreement and subsequent developments that these negotiations are off track and have been for some time. They do not begin to meet the minimum criteria outlined in our several Bipartisan Policy Center reports. Let me name five major problems that I see currently with the framework proposal that has been agreed to.

First, the Obama Administration's negotiating tactics have been seriously flawed from the beginning, abandoning central principles at the very outset of the negotiations. An agreement that builds on the outline emerging from the negotiations and trumpeted by the Administration as a breakthrough will allow Iran to retain a robust, industrial-capacity ability to enrich uranium—the core of nuclear weapons. This was never the intention of the international community until the Obama Administration negotiators took the helm and changed direction. The original intent—to deprive Iran of this nuclear weapons infrastructure—was deemed to be ''just too hard to achieve.''

The result is that Iran can now assume a guarantee that it will have the right to enrich uranium—the regime's fundamental demand from the beginning and one which the United Nations Security Council firmly and consistently refused until the Obama Administration began these negotiations. In the wake of that fundamental concession, we will have to rely on elaborate monitoring and compliance verification mechanisms to keep the uranium

enrichment enterprise within agreed bounds.

That directly leads to my second major problem with the outlined agreement. On the surface, there is a lot of reassurance that we would be able to detect cheating, and the President has emphasized this point repeatedly. Well, I have seen all of this before. I served here in this Senate when we were told our agreements with North Korea could be verified and would lead to a safer world. We were misled by that illusion. Today, 20 years after the nuclear agreement with North Korea, negotiated by the Clinton Administration, that country now has an estimated 20 nuclear warheads and the Chinese experts tell us the North Koreans will have more than 40 by the end of next year and an effective ICBM—intercontinental ballistic missile—to put those weapons on.

All that work developing such a huge, dangerous nuclear arsenal was done after we concluded a negotiated agreement to end North Korea's nuclear program, confident that we would be able to detect cheating. Let me repeat that. All that North Korea has achieved in violation of the agreement we made with them has occurred after that agreement, not before. And today they sit as a dangerous nuclear-armed nation, with over 20 nuclear warheads that can be easily—and have been—attached to ICBMs.

Now I fear we are making the same mistake in negotiating with another rogue regime. In recent days, it has become difficult for anyone to maintain that the agreement under consideration by this Administration with Iran will provide the transparency we need. Senior Iranian officials and authorities, including the Ayatollah himself and the chief of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, have said repeatedly that there will be no international inspections of Iranian military facilities.

We know that much of the nefarious nuclear weapons development work has gone on in such facilities. Barring access to them must simply be the end of any deal if that holds. The White House has indicated that such hard-line statements by the regime are part of their negotiating tactics. I do not take comfort from that. If that is so, then it must be proven at the negotiating table, not simply by declaration from our White House.

If the Administration brings us a deal that does not include complete transparency and the total ability to monitor Iranian compliance anywhere in that country, then all Members of Congress must stand and reject it. Third, I find there are many other nearly sinister details buried within this outline that are hidden from those not steeped in the technical details of this entire matter.

Many show that our negotiators caved on key issues, some at the last minute, to prevent Iran from walking out. In fact, the entire negotiations process since it began 6 years ago has been a steady uninterrupted litany of concessions as we give ground on one issue after another. The outline agreement confirms that pattern and hints at more to come.

One of the many examples of this is the agreement to allow continuing research and development of the most advanced centrifuges within the Fordow site that is safely buried deep beneath a mountain. Because there will not be uranium enriched there for the first 10 years of the agreement, we are told to take comfort. In fact, the developments that will occur in that sheltered bunker will make a nuclear ''break out'' capability certain and rapid once the agreement expires in a decade.

Even President Obama recently admitted that in the final years of the period covered by the outline, ''the breakout time would have shrunk almost to zero.'' That startling admission is a mortal blow to this agreement, in my view, and it comes from the chief advocate of the deal.

A fourth problem with the outline is the essential issue of sanctions relief. Initially, after the outline was released, the White House fact sheet emphasized that sanctions would be lifted gradually in stages as the Iranians showed a pattern of compliance with the terms of an agreement. The Iranian negotiators and the Supreme Leader immediately refuted that claim. They continue to say there is no such agreement and that all sanctions must be lifted immediately upon signing. It remains for them a nonnegotiable demand.

President Obama responded in a press conference last week that all of a sudden he was not very concerned about the phasing or timing issue or the way sanctions would be lifted. Instead, he said, and again I quote, the so-called ''snap-back'' provisions that would reimpose sanctions in the event of noncompliance were more important.

These Presidential comments signaled publicly that once again the Ayatollah could have his way. Sadly, no one seriously gives any credibility to these alleged ''snap-back'' provisions and their efficacy once the sanctions dam has burst.

Fifth, another mortal flaw in the outline is the issue of expiration date—the ''sunset clauses''. The outline and the White House talking points are designed to sell or confuse this issue. Various timeframes have been mentioned—10 years, 15 years, 25 years, permanent. The fact is the core limitations on Iran's nuclear infrastructure, if they are actually implemented over time, expire in 10 years, others in 15. The sanctions against Iran will have long since disappeared and Iran will then have the technical ability, the will, and the wealth to sprint toward a nuclear arsenal, as the President has acknowledged.

Ten years or even fifteen years is tomorrow afternoon in this dangerous game for the world's future. Again, the President's own words tell us everything we need to know about the effectiveness of the deal he is pressing on us. I quote again. ''What is a more relevant fear would be that in year 13, 14, 15, they have advanced centrifuges that enrich uranium fairly rapidly, and at that point the breakout times would have shrunk almost down to zero.''

This is, indeed, the most relevant fear presented by the negotiations with the Iranian regime; namely, the fear that Iran will be given the path to nuclear weapons possession, resulting in consequences that are not acceptable. We should all agree with President Obama that that is, indeed, the most relevant fear presented by his negotiations with the Iranian regime.

But at this moment, it seems most probable that we will be called upon to consider a deeply flawed agreement, one that is worse than no agreement at all, but this is not entirely unavoidable. We still have time to press the negotiators on both sides to change the outcome of their talks. The Iranians must know that with passage of the Iran Nuclear Review Agreement Act, Congress has become an important player at the table. There will be no new constraints on their maximalist positions.

If they want a deal now, they must give ground; if not, they will face new, more painful, and more relentless sanctions pressure. This is a profound moment in our history. A nuclear-armed Iran would present a danger to the Middle East, to the United States, and to the world that is impossible to overstate. Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons always has been at the heart of our nuclear strategy. More than that, it is at the heart of the future of the world.

Allowing Iran to develop the capacity to develop those weapons, igniting thereby a nuclear arms race among its neighbors and beyond must be prevented at any cost. There is nothing whatsoever partisan about this request. Neither I nor most of my Republican colleagues are attacking the President or trying to deny him a foreign policy triumph or wishing him ill in this important task.

Similarly, I trust our Democratic colleagues will not be blindly supporting the President on this issue no matter what agreement might emerge from the Iran negotiations. In many ways, the future of these negotiations is now in our hands. We must pass the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act with as much bipartisan support as we can achieve in order to play a significant or any role in this process.

We must not provoke a veto that can be sustained, thereby depriving Congress of our role and voice. We must all use the next 2 months to press the White House to demand an agreement that permanently halts Iran's nuclear ambitions. We must then evaluate objectively and honestly the agreement that emerges; accept it if we can, reject it if we must. This is a solemn duty that the Constitution requires of the

Senate. I trust that each of us will be up to the task and the challenge we are facing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I first want to thank Senator COATS for the manner in which he has presented his views. We may not agree on every issue he raised in his remarks, but I fully agree that we have a responsibility to continue to work in a bipartisan manner in order to achieve this review statute so Congress can have an orderly way to express its review. I thank him for the thoughtful presentation he has made in regard to the legislation that is before us.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

EVENTS IN BALTIMORE

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I know everyone in this body, this country, has been focused on the events in Baltimore. I live in Baltimore. It has affected all of us in our city. We love Baltimore. It is heartbreaking to see the violence that has taken place over the last several days, particularly yesterday. Baltimore is known for its neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are our strength. People take great pride in their neighborhood. There is a lot of ethnic pride in Baltimore. We have a proud tradition. We have a proud tradition of blue-collar workers who helped build this great country in steelmaking and shipbuilding and automaking.

We have government workers who have helped provide the services to the people of this country. We have a high-tech workforce that is the future of Baltimore. Baltimore is a great destination for tourists—our Inner Harbor. I could go on and on. But Baltimore is known for its people, its friendliness, and its real pride in strong neighborhoods.

That was shaken very badly during the events of yesterday as we saw violence. What happened to Freddie Gray is something that needs to be fully investigated. We want justice. All of us want justice. I was pleased we will have that independent investigation done by the Department of Justice.

Thousands of protesters were out in the streets in Baltimore exercising their First Amendment rights, expressing their frustration. They did it in an orderly way, in the way I would think we would want to see people express their views about matters of importance, including justice for Freddie Gray. There were a small number who decided to take to the streets in violence. It was counterproductive to the message. The family of Freddie Gray urged yesterday, particularly the day of his funeral, to be a day without protests.

But these individuals decided they would take matters into their own hands. What they did was hurt their community, hurt the neighborhoods, and hurt the city I love. Senator MIKULSKI and Congressman CUMMINGS, Congressman SARBANES, and others have been in touch with the mayor of Baltimore, Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, with Governor Hogan, with the White House. We are taking all steps in order to preserve public safety in Baltimore and to make sure justice is provided in regard to the tragic death of Freddie Gray.

I would just urge all people to exercise restraint so we can provide safe communities for the people of Baltimore, that we will rebuild from this episode, and we will move forward. I thank many of my colleagues who have contacted Senator MIKULSKI and myself to express their concerns. We know these are very challenging times.

We urge all citizens of Baltimore to exercise restraint but to continue their passion for justice, as certainly Senator MIKULSKI and I and our congressional delegation will insist upon.

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

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

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I see Senator COONS on the floor, and he is prepared to speak with regard to S. 615.

First, I thank Senator COONS for his extraordinary leadership with regard to S. 615. He is one of those individuals who worked very closely with Senator CORKER and me to find a common way to resolve some extremely challenging issues we had. Let me take you back just a few weeks, where most people thought it was totally impossible for the Senate to get together on a bill that would provide an orderly way for us to review a potential agreement with Iran on nuclear weapons.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee had scheduled a vote, there was a recess, and I think most of us felt that the bill would come out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee but that it would be a bill on which the President would continue his veto threat, and its future was anything but certain. Then the Senate Foreign Relations Committee went to work under Senator CORKER's leadership, and we were able to resolve these issues.

But one of the key players was Senator COONS. Senator COONS was traveling during the recess. He was in Africa doing important work on behalf of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I doubt that he got any sleep because I was getting calls from him at times when it was the middle of the night in Africa giving us very constructive ways to deal with some of the very difficult issues of congressional review, the length of time necessary for congressional review, how we can make sure that we had the information we needed, and that it gave the President the strongest possible hand. I thank Senator COONS for his extraordinary leadership and work on behalf of the legislation we have before us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, first, I thank Senator CARDIN for his gracious remarks and for his strong and capable leadership.

I come to the floor today to speak about the Iranian nuclear negotiations and the need for Congress to play a constructive, meaningful role in reviewing any potential deal.

This week, the full Senate will consider the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015 which would ensure that Congress has the ability to consider any nuclear deal with Iran before any congressionally enacted sanctions on Iran's nuclear program are rolled back. This bill will also ensure that Congress exercises its oversight over the implementation of any agreement through imposing rigorous reporting requirements and certifications on the administration.

This bill passed the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate unanimously after Senators CORKER and CARDIN—the chair and ranking member—worked tirelessly together to ensure that it would receive bipartisan support. They carefully negotiated a deal that defeated amendments that would have prevented the Obama administration from continuing to negotiate in good faith. In my view, it is a great testament to their leadership that we were able to come together on a bipartisan bill that passed the committee unanimously and that the President has now said he would sign.

For the last 4 years, I have been hugely frustrated by the failure of Republicans and Democrats to come together in this Senate to pass legislation for the American people. The Republicans are now in the majority and have a chance to move past obstructionism and into leadership and to show that in this Senate, we have an opportunity to pass a bill, that this Senate plays a constructive role in protecting the national interests of the United States.

Leader MCCONNELL said that he wants a functioning Senate, that he wants regular order, that he wants the Senate to play its rightful role in foreign affairs. Well, here is the chance.

Let's review what has happened with this piece of legislation. The Republican chair of the Foreign Relations Committee—working well with his Democratic counterpart—crafted this bipartisan bill. Today, it has 44 Republican cosponsors. It passed the committee, which fully and thoroughly debated the bill and many potential amendments. A committee with views as broad as Republican Senators JOHNSON and RUBIO and PAUL to Democratic Senators BOXER and MURPHY—a very broad range of views on our foreign policy—came together to pass this bill

unanimously. If that is not regular order, I don't know what is.

If Senator MCCONNELL wants a functioning Senate, I believe we should respect the committee process that Chairman CORKER and Ranking Member CARDIN led to achieve this compromise. This bill gives Leader MCCONNELL exactly the opportunity he wants to ensure that this Senate exercises its role in protecting America's national interest.

I particularly like what my Republican colleague from South Carolina, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, said recently:

> Anybody who monkeys with this bill is going to run into a buzz saw. Anybody who offers an amendment that will break this agreement apart . . . the beneficiary will be the Iranians.

That is why I stand here today to urge my colleagues to avoid attaching poison-pill amendments that are outside the scope of the current ongoing negotiations and pass this bill as currently passed out of the Foreign Relations Committee and as currently supported by a majority of Senate Republicans.

Over the last few years, Iran has responded to congressionally enacted sanctions by finally coming to the negotiating table to discuss and deal with its illicit nuclear weapons program. The Obama administration and the other P5 + 1 countries have been engaged in difficult, demanding negotiations with the Iranian theocratic regime. After a few extensions that have effectively frozen and in some ways rolled back certain parts of Iran's illicit nuclear program, the administration is in the final phases of their negotiations. Earlier their month, the President released the parameters of a potential deal, with the technical details and a few remaining critical gaps to be finalized possibly by the end of June.

This bill is not a referendum on the President's decision to pursue a path of diplomacy with Iran. This bill is not a referendum on the parameters announced on April 2. The bill before us this week has a simple, clear goal: It is about creating an orderly process that allows Congress to review any deal. As negotiations come to an end, it would ensure that Congress can play a constructive role after an agreement is reached by considering whether the deal is strong enough to warrant rolling back congressionally enacted sanctions. Yet, some—a few of my colleagues have insisted on making this bill a partisan exercise rather than keeping it the responsible, bipartisan measure that is before us now.

This bill is not about debating the merits of an ultimate deal now. We will have that chance when or if a deal is reached over the summer. It is not about, I hope, killing the negotiations before they have a chance to conclude. This bill is not about creating a list of complaints about Iran's destructive behavior in areas outside of its nuclear program. It could and should pass now, in its current form, without amendment.

I believe I have been as outspoken as anybody about Iran's destructive behavior, but I am troubled by some of the amendments being offered to make Iran's human rights record, its support for terrorism, and its relationship with Israel a part of these negotiations. Yes, Iran's human rights record is atrocious. Its support for terrorism threatens the stability of its neighbors and has taken countless innocent lives. Its continued threatening of Israel and its unwillingness to recognize the right of the Jewish State of Israel to exist is cowardly, dangerous, and just plain wrong. Iran must release the four Americans it currently holds hostage. I think everyone in this body would agree these are legitimate concerns for our consideration. Yet, the truth remains that they are outside the scope of the current negotiations around Iran's nuclear program. Congress must resist the temptation to make them a sticking point in those negotiations by including them as amendments to this bill.

Let's be clear. There are already congressionally enacted sanctions on Iran for its behavior in these areas. The deal's parameters, as published April 2, said that ''U.S. sanctions on Iran for terrorism, human rights abuses, and ballistic missiles will remain in place under the deal.'' No one is talking about removing those sanctions. The negotiations are about Iran's illicit nuclear weapons program and the critical importance of preventing Iran from ever building a nuclear weapon.

I have long believed a nuclear-armed Iran would pose a grave threat to the region, to Israel, and to the world. The nuclear arms race it would set off throughout the Middle East would have horrible consequences for global security. That is why throughout the negotiating process I have remained adamant that no deal is better than a bad deal, and I have closely consulted with the administration on that point as well as many others. I have met with senior administration officials to discuss these recently announced parameters and have been clear that I remain concerned about closing the remaining gaps and the need to maintain pressure on the Iranian regime to close any pathway to their development of a nuclear weapon capability.

I support this bill as it is. It is responsible and focused on the issue at hand. It ensures that Congress gets to weigh in if a deal is reached, and it strengthens this administration's ability to negotiate the best deal it possibly can.

Every Republican in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted for this bill, all 10 of them—from Senator RAND PAUL and Senator RUBIO to Senator JOHNSON and Senator BARRASSO. All nine Democrats on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee supported this bill. All 19 Senators on this Foreign Relations Committee represent as wide a range of foreign policy views as could exist. So I urge my colleagues on both sides to pause and reflect before supporting amendments that would make this a partisan exercise rather than a prudent use of congressional authority. If we want Congress to play a responsible role overseeing any potential deal, this bill gives us that chance. The alternative to this bill is not a better bill; it is a deal without any meaningful congressional input.

I have been as critical of Iran and distrusting of its intentions as anyone in this body, but if unrelated amendments become attached to this bill, I will not support its final passage.

Because of the great leadership of these two Senators, we have here a rare moment for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate as a whole to demonstrate our ability to move past what have been divisive and partisan fights over the last 4 years and come together and enact into law a measure that demonstrates our ability to give constructive, timely input on one of the most important national security challenges of our day and to restrain our sometimes extreme and divisive instincts in this body and instead demonstrate our ability to overcome those instincts and show our relevance. Let's not miss this opportunity to work together in the best interests of our Nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. I thank the Senator for his constructive comments and his work on the committee.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to discuss the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act.

Early this month, Iran and the P5+1 countries agreed to a framework deal to restrict Iran's nuclear program and to submit it to international inspections. Negotiators now have until June 30 to try to reach a final agreement.

At the same time, the Senate has been advancing legislation requiring the President to submit any final agreement to Congress for review. That is the legislation on the floor before us today.

Congress is divided along partisan lines on many issues, but we are united in our conviction that Iran must not be allowed to acquire a nuclear weapon and that the people's elected representatives should have the opportunity to review any final agreement with Iran.

This bipartisan consensus was reflected in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's unanimous vote in favor

of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. I thank Chairman CORKER, who is on the floor here with me today, and Ranking Member CARDIN, also on the floor, for their statesmanship and the spirit of bipartisan compromise that they exhibited in negotiating the act. They did a great job.

According to the legislation, the President must submit any final agreement to Congress. Congress would then have 30 days to hear from negotiators and outside experts and to determine if additional action is warranted, including a resolution of approval or disapproval.

I believe congressional oversight is appropriate because the President, in order to implement any agreement with Iran, will need to set aside sanctions put in place by Congress. I also voted for this bill because it reasserts the proper role of Congress in providing oversight of the President's execution of foreign policy.

As a member of the Senator Foreign Relations Committee, I believe the best way to resolve the standoff over Iran's nuclear program is a hardnosed agreement that cuts off all paths Iran could take to pursue a nuclear weapon.

It was therefore crucial for me that the legislation considered by the committee not hinder our negotiators' efforts to reach a strong agreement. I believe that standard should be maintained as the full Senate considers this legislation.

I believe it is also essential that the spirit of cooperation and bipartisanship that was demonstrated by Senators CORKER and CARDIN in forging a bipartisan bill continue this week as the full Senate takes up the Iran legislation. Amendments that undermine the administration's negotiations or structurally alter this careful bipartisan compromise should be rejected by the Senate.

While I supported this bill in the Foreign Relations Committee, if the bipartisan nature of the legislation is eroded on the floor, the bill will no longer merit my support. This is a serious matter that will require the Senate to rise above the desire of some to force votes on poison-pill amendments that would destroy the bipartisan balance. We have to rise above politics here because we are confronted by a dangerous and unacceptable status quo in Iran.

The benefits of a strong final deal could be significant. Such a deal would stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and ensure that it could not pursue destabilizing activities in the region with impunity. It would prevent a nuclear arms race in the Middle East and advance greater long-term security for our regional allies. That is why, even as Congress reaffirms its role in reviewing any final agreement, we need to give the administration and its international partners every opportunity to bring these difficult negotiations to a successful conclusion.

With so much at stake for the United States, for Israel, and for the entire world, it is more important than ever that the Senate rise above partisan politics and reaffirm bipartisan cooperation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

I withhold the suggestion of the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to thank Senator SHAHEEN. She talked about the bipartisan way the committee operated. She played a large part in bringing us together in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and working over the recess. I want to thank the Senator for her input and the manner in which we were able to strengthen our negotiators and maintain the proper role for the Congress.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, if I could respond, I think one of the reasons for the success of the agreement was because of the efforts of Senator CARDIN and Chairman CORKER to solicit input from members of the committee to see what people could agree to and, where we had concerns, to respond to those in crafting the legislation. It truly was a bipartisan, very statesmanlike effort, and I thank the Senators.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:31 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT—Continued

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, 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. FRANKEN. 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. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

(The remarks of Mr. FRANKEN pertaining to the introduction of S. 1112 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I yield the floor to the good Senator from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip is recognized.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today and for the next few days we will have the opportunity to consider a very important piece of legislation, the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015—a piece of legislation that, like all the legislation we consider here, is important, but this particular legislation is important to our national security and, indeed, it is important to the peace and security of our allies around the world.

This bill represents a good, bipartisan effort. It passed unanimously out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by a vote of 19 to 0 earlier this month.

The reason this legislation is so important is because it would guarantee Congress the opportunity and the time necessary to scrutinize any agreement reached between the Obama administration and the P5+1 nations that are currently negotiating on the Iranian nuclear capacity. It would also prohibit the President from lifting sanctions on Iran during this period of review.

This is not important because we are U.S. Senators; this is important because we represent the American people, and the American people need to understand what is in this agreement and what it means to their safety and security and to that of future generations.

I think it is critical that Congress have this opportunity to understand completely and thoroughly any deal that is cut between this administration and Iran and, of course, its implications, particularly on a matter that is so vital to our national security. If the Congress can have a voice on ongoing trade negotiations—which we do—with many of our allies, how much more so should Congress have, at the very least, a review of the final negotiated deal with one of our stated adversaries?

As I have made clear before, I have serious reservations about the framework that has been announced with Iran. This framework, as it is called, is right now very vague, and it strikes me as somewhat convoluted. It also represents a significant departure from longstanding U.S. policy to prevent an Iranian nuclear weapon and instead puts us on a path—a feeble path, at that—to try to contain an Iranian nuclear weapon. Such an outcome is irresponsible, unacceptable, and dangerous. We simply cannot trust the Iranian leadership with threshold nuclear capabilities, which is exactly what the President's framework would do at this point. The concept of good-faith negotiations between us and Iran is a fantasy. Iran is a rogue regime and the world's foremost sponsor of international terrorism, and to trust them—to trust them—would be laughable and also reckless.

Iran and its proxies have been attacking and killing Americans and attempting to undermine our national security interests for at least the last three decades. Unfortunately, Iran's proxy war throughout the Middle East is well documented. Right at this moment, Iran's regional adventurism continues to destabilize areas where American interests are at stake, including war-torn Syria, Yemen, and Iraq. Even