

it just before the August recess, but Senator RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, Senator JOHN MCCAIN, Senator CLAIRE MCCASKILL, Senator JOHN CORNYN, Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP, and more than 20 other Senators have joined in this effort to deal with the real problem, which is the growth of trafficking due to the online presence and specifically some of these websites like backpage.

The bill would make three narrowly crafted changes to what is called the Communications Decency Act to allow backpage and other websites that knowingly facilitate sex trafficking to be brought to justice.

First, it allows victims of sex trafficking to seek justice against websites. It does so by removing the law's unintended protection we talked about for online sex traffickers. Second, it helps law enforcement by allowing the prosecution of websites, again, that knowingly assist, support, or facilitate a violation of already existing Federal sex trafficking laws. There is already a law in place that makes it illegal to engage in sex trafficking. The exception is, again, these websites online that are protected by the Communications Decency Act. So it basically says that you will be treated like others if you engage in, facilitate, and support it.

Finally, it lets State law enforcement—not just the Department of Justice—take legal action against these websites that violate Federal sex trafficking laws.

The Communications Decency Act, again, was enacted by Congress a couple decades ago—21 years ago—and now it needs to be brought into the 21st century. Again, it is an important piece of legislation, broadly speaking, but on this particular issue—inadvertently, I believe—it has allowed this incredible injustice to continue.

In my view, victims shouldn't have to wait one more day to get the justice they deserve. State and local prosecutors, those on the frontlines, should be able to prosecute backpage and others for their roles in these crimes.

The leading website for online sex trafficking has and will continue to escape legal justice for its active role in trafficking unless Congress acts. The solution is right in front of us. This bipartisan legislation will make the changes necessary. By the way, these are changes that a number of groups on the outside have called for and have strongly supported.

On August 15, I was proud to announce the support of 16 new Ohio organizations and officials who endorsed the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act. The list includes anti-human trafficking advocates, human rights groups, State officials, and Ohio sex trafficking victims, among others. This is in addition to the list of dozens of national anti-human trafficking and law enforcement groups who have come out publicly in support of this bill. I appreciate them. I appreciate what the human trafficking advocacy groups do

every day, trying to help these victims. I really appreciate our law enforcement officials, and the fact that organizations like the Fraternal Order of Police step forward to support this legislation is very important.

On August 16, the day after we had this endorsement from all these groups from Ohio, 50 attorneys general from across the United States—50, including Ohio's Mike DeWine—sent a letter to Congress asking for the Communications Decency Act to be changed to allow State and local authorities to hold backpage and other websites that knowingly facilitate sex trafficking accountable.

The letter stated, in part: "It is both ironic and tragic that the CDA, which was intended to protect children from indecent material on the internet, is now used as a shield by those who profit from prostitution and crimes against children."

They are right. Initially the Communications Decency Act was put in place to try to shield young people from pornography.

What these attorneys general are calling for and what this Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act will do is allow us to go after these websites. This bill will allow victims to get justice, as I said, and will do so in a way that protects internet companies that are doing the right thing. Notably, we preserve the Communications Decency Act's Good Samaritan provision, which protects those good actors who proactively block and screen for offensive material, shielding them from any possibility of frivolous lawsuits. That is important.

The good actors out there—and the vast majority of websites are good actors—have nothing to do with sex trafficking. In fact, many of them police their site for it. The Facebooks of the world and the Googles of the world are not the bad actors.

We are gaining momentum within the tech community, some of whom have concerns about changing the Communications Decency Act. Just this week, we got a letter from Oracle, strongly supporting the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act. They agreed that this narrowly crafted bill will hold the bad actors accountable while protecting well-intentioned websites.

Oracle's letter says, in part:

Your legislation does not, as suggested by the bill's opponents, usher the end of the Internet. If enacted, it will establish some measure of accountability for those that cynically sell advertising but are unprepared to help curtail sex trafficking.

Other tech companies have also joined in the fight to ensure that we can stop sex trafficking. I know they are going to follow Oracle's lead in publicly supporting this legislation.

Courts across the country, again, have made it clear that their hands are tied. Their hands are tied in bringing backpage and other websites to justice.

It is our responsibility right here in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. Congress to change this law. Women and chil-

dren have had their most basic rights stripped from them and have been let down by our judicial system and, frankly, up to now, by Congress in their search for justice.

With these latest calls to action from judicial rulings and this recent letter from 50 attorneys general, any future injustice in the legal system because of the Communications Decency Act falls on Congress. It falls on the shoulders of those in the U.S. Senate and the House.

It is not just the attorneys general around the country who have supported this; the district attorneys have sent a letter this week supporting it—again, other law enforcement across the board.

Through this legislation, we have the opportunity to right this wrong, to make a real difference in the lives of vulnerable women and children who have been victims of trafficking.

Justice cannot be seen, but its absence can be felt. Those who have been trafficked by backpage, only to see the company prosper and escape legal consequences, have experienced unimaginable injustice. They feel it.

The path to action is clear. Victims need this legislation that the courts, attorneys general, district attorneys, victims, and others have been calling for. Congress must pass the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act in order to correct this injustice.

I yield back my time.

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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of Executive Calendar No. 250; that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

IN THE ARMY

The following named Army National Guard of the United States officers for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be brigadier general

Col. John K. Muller

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

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.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 188 on the nomination of Timothy Kelly, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was unavoidably absent for rollcall vote No. 189, the motion to table Paul motion to refer H.R. 601, the Emergency Supplemental Continuing Resolution and Debt Limit Act, with instructions. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was unavoidably absent for rollcall vote No. 190, the motion to table the motion to refer H.R. 601 to committee with instructions to report back without any provision that was not contained in the House message accompanying the bill H.R. 601. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was unavoidably absent for rollcall vote No. 191, the motion to invoke cloture on the House message to accompany H.R. 601, with further amendment—emergency aid, debt limit, CR. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was unavoidably absent for rollcall vote No. 192, the motion to concur in the House amendment to H.R. 601 with further amendment. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.●

(At the request of Mr. NELSON, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

DIASER RELIEF FUNDING BILL

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I am home in West Miami, FL, which is now under a Hurricane Watch for Hurricane Irma and currently projected to take a direct hit from a category 5 storm. Tropical storm conditions are expected in south Florida less than 48 hours after the time of this vote. Had I remained in Washington, DC, the earliest possible return to south Florida would have given me less than 12 hours to safely secure my home and my mother's home and otherwise prepare my family to face the brunt and the aftermath of a potentially catastrophic storm. Therefore, given these circumstances and the fact that my vote would not have been determinative of the outcome of the measures before the

Senate, I felt the prudent course of action was to remain in south Florida, take appropriate actions to protect my family and helping to coordinate efforts between Federal, State, and local officials.

If I had been able to participate in today's Senate vote in Washington, I would have voted to approve the supplemental package before the Senate, but my vote would come despite significant reservations about some of the other items attached to this legislation.

As I have always done in the past, I support providing additional emergency resources for disaster aid and recovery. Disaster relief is an appropriate function of the Federal Government. Unlike some previous disaster relief legislation, these funds are to be spent immediately, and are properly targeted to assist the areas impacted by Hurricane Harvey and potentially Hurricane Irma.

The rest of this spending package, however, contains items that, under normal circumstances and offered separately, I have opposed.

I strongly disagree with the decision made by the administration to agree to pair funding for FEMA and emergency disaster relief to short-term extensions to the continuing resolution, the debt ceiling and the National Flood Insurance Program unaccompanied by significant reforms.

During my service in the Senate, my support for increasing the debt limit has consistently in the past and will again in the future be conditioned on meaningful spending reforms that address our long-term debt.

Absent extenuating circumstances such as the outbreak of the Zika virus last year, I have consistently opposed passage of short-term continuing resolutions because it is an incredibly inefficient way of spending taxpayer dollars and fails to provide the certainty required for effective planning.

I am frustrated that Congress has once again temporarily reauthorized the outdated National Flood Insurance Program without enacting a long-term solution that makes much-needed improvements for the people of Florida and places this vital program on a sustainable path.

It is shameful these necessary and important measures are not being considered separately. Linking them to funds needed to assist our fellow Americans recovering from a devastating natural disaster is a cynical effort to avoid subjecting these measures to the scrutiny and debate they merit.

Today I was informed by its director that FEMA has less than 2 days of emergency funds remaining. Given that Texas continues to recover from the catastrophic effects of Hurricane Harvey and that the State of Florida is facing the most powerful Atlantic storm ever recorded, I have no choice but to support this measures, but I consider the manner in which this measure was structured, linking emergency disaster relief for victims which requires immediate action with other con-

troversial measures we still have time to debate through the regular order, to be among the most politically cynical efforts I have ever witnessed.●

BUDGET SCOREKEEPING REPORT

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I wish to submit to the Senate the budget scorekeeping report for September 2017. The report compares current-law levels of spending and revenues with the amounts the Senate agreed to in the budget resolution for fiscal year 2017, S. Con. Res. 3. This information is necessary for the Senate Budget Committee to determine whether budget points of order lie against pending legislation. The Republican staff of the Senate Budget Committee and the Congressional Budget Office, CBO, prepared this report pursuant to section 308(b) of the Congressional Budget Act, CBA.

My last filing can be found in the RECORD on July 12, 2017. The information contained in this report captures legislative activity since that filing through September 5, 2017.

Republican Budget Committee staff prepared tables 1-3 of this report.

Table 1 gives the amount by which each Senate authorizing committee exceeds or is below its allocation for budget authority and outlays under the most recently adopted budget resolution. This information is used for enforcing committee allocations pursuant to section 302 of the CBA. For this reporting period, 11 of the 16 authorizing committees are in compliance with their allocations, two fewer than my last report. Legislative activity during this reporting period brought both the Committee on the Judiciary, for a State compact relating to the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission, P.L. 115-54, and the Committee on Foreign Relations, for the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act, P.L. 115-44, out of compliance.

In total, authorizing committees are estimated to increase outlays by nearly \$2 billion more than they were allocated over the fiscal year 2017-2026 period. The largest spending violation since the passage of the current budget resolution occurred during this reporting period. The VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017, P.L. 115-46, increased budget authority by \$2 billion and outlays by \$1.9 billion over the fiscal year 2017-2026 window.

Tables 2-3 of this report, related to activities of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, remain unchanged from my previous report.

In addition to the tables provided by Budget Committee Republican staff, I am submitting CBO tables, which I will use to enforce budget totals approved by the Congress.

CBO provided a spending and revenue report for fiscal year 2017, which helps