

in to the pressure to put the restaurant in a more acceptable part of town, but like most people in South St. Pete, the Brayboys are a different cut because they are not easily deterred. If there is one thing my colleagues should know about the people of South St. Pete, it is this: Don't test their resolve, because you are in for a surprise.

Undeterred, Mr. and Mrs. Brayboys took money out of their 401(k) accounts and poured all of their life savings into buying that hulk of a building on 22nd Street. After gutting the inside and pouring in their blood, sweat, and tears into remodeling the property, Chief's Creole Cafe opened in November of 2014 and has been going strong ever since, creating jobs and changing the way people think about South St. Pete. This is a picture of how the restaurant looks today.

Despite the warnings of all of those doubtful lenders, they have been able to sustain the business by attracting both locals and customers from outside of the area of South St. Pete. Does that not look like something that is a well-run, growing, successful business?

So the old saying stands: If you build it, and if you really try, they will come.

Now, this is a great story of stubborn determination triumphing over fear and adversity and rejection after rejection, but this type of story is few and far between in too many parts of Florida and across the country.

So let me show you another picture. This is the Three Oaks Plaza. The Three Oaks Plaza used to be the location of a Dollar Tree store, but the store closed last year. This is how it used to look, and this is how it looks now. The closing of the Dollar Tree store came on the heels of the closing of the local Walmart nearby.

Unfortunately, this is all too common in South St. Pete and too many other parts of Florida. The problem isn't new, but we need a new way to think about it. We need economic policies that rely less on outside investors and outside companies to come in and remake the image of the area and rely more, instead, on empowering local residents to create their own businesses. They are more likely to keep profits in the community, creating a more sustainable loop of economic activity.

That is what I want to recommend that this Senate and future Senates do with legislation. Consider the example of legislation that I introduced earlier this year called the Economic Modernization Act. That bill does a lot of things, but one key thing it does is to create a new tax break for local businesses that move into buildings that have long sat idle and vacant. Under a piece of legislation such as that, if a business moves into a building that has been vacant for 2 or more years and renovates the property, the business would be able to get a tax deduction worth many more times than what it put into it. Any profits earned at the

property, for the first 3 years in that building, would be a tax deduction. The deduction would be capped. It could be, in legislation, at 50 percent of the business's wages to make sure that the employees are also getting a benefit, and the more the business pays its employees, the more the business saves with that tax deduction and, therefore, saves in taxes.

Simply put, the bill, or legislation like it, will make it easier for local entrepreneurs to rebuild their community, helping to turn more places like this first photo into places like Chief's Creole Cafe.

Now, that is what we ought to be doing, not digging out old policies from the 1980s and calling it something new like our colleagues here in the Congress did last year with the tax bill. The tax bill added trillions to the national debt and made it easier for big corporations to game the tax system and put Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, our infrastructure, and all other sorts of priorities at risk because the entire national debt is run up \$2 trillion over a 10-year period.

Where is the money to do all of these other priorities—Medicaid, Medicare, infrastructure, Social Security?

When big corporations see places like South St. Pete, they don't necessarily see the financial opportunity that Mr. and Mrs. Brayboy saw and turn it into a going concern. They don't necessarily want to empower places. Sometimes it just goes over their heads, and they miss the opportunity.

We need to incentivize local people to revitalize a community and, in the process, to be economically successful. We need to create more stories like the successful story of the Brayboys. We need to make it easier for locals to take old, abandoned buildings and turn them into new, thriving businesses that value their people and employ local residents. We need to encourage local communities, which understand their own needs, to be financially successful and have an opportunity to do that.

Despite what others say, instead of a tax bill that raises the national debt by \$2 trillion, wouldn't you believe that if we could do this all over America, it would help so much of the economic underpinnings of our country?

Let's think of a way that it should be, and this is one way. We need to do more to lift up those at the bottom and help them help themselves. I hope our colleagues will agree, and I hope our colleagues will consider legislation like this in the future.

I yield the floor.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as the Senator from Louisiana, the Senate stands in recess until 7:20 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:07 p.m., recessed until 7:20 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. KENNEDY).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will come to order, please.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for 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.

#### S.J. RES. 54

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I hope the Saudi royal family was paying attention to yesterday's debate in the U.S. Senate. The bipartisan vote on S.J. Res. 54, of which I am a cosponsor, was significant for multiple reasons, but most of all for what it says about the potency of the outrage and disgust in this country and in the Congress about the conduct of Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi Crown Prince.

That outrage has been building over time, as the number of civilian casualties since Saudi Arabia's intervention and ongoing aerial bombardment of Yemen—one of the world's poorest countries—has swollen into the thousands. We have all seen the photographs of the dead and dying and of children who are just skin and bones. It is said that 85,000 children already have starved to death. The UN warns that 13 million Yemeni civilians could starve to death by the end of this year, if the war does not end.

Of course, the Houthis and their Iranian benefactors share much of the blame for the death and destruction in Yemen, but we are not supporting them. Rather, until recently, we were providing aerial refueling for Saudi warplanes, and we continue to provide the Saudis with intelligence and targeting assistance.

As if the kidnapping of Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri, the blockade of Qatar, the imprisonment of women's rights activists, and the carnage in Yemen were not enough, the outrage toward the Crown Prince finally boiled over with the horrific, premeditated murder of Jamal Khashoggi, a respected journalist, Saudi citizen, and American resident, who had criticized the royal family.

Mr. Khashoggi's murder and dismemberment by Saudi Government agents at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul triggered an international outcry, and it exposed the depth of depravity of the Saudi royal family. That an ally of the United States would so brazenly commit such a crime and then so blatantly attempt to cover it up, speaks volumes.

After a string of lies by the Saudi authorities, it is only due to the Turkish

Government and independent investigative journalists that we know that Mr. Khashoggi was murdered, a crime punishable by death in Saudi Arabia and many other countries. In fact, far lesser crimes—even some nonviolent crimes—are punishable by death in Saudi Arabia.

While we owe thanks to the Turkish Government for exposing the facts about Mr. Khashoggi's case, we cannot ignore that Turkey's President Erdogan is also responsible for widespread repression, including the arbitrary arrests and imprisonment of journalists, civil servants, and thousands of other critics who have been convicted and locked away after unfair trials. Torture is rampant in Turkey's jails, as it is in Saudi Arabia.

We know that multiple Saudi officials, including the Foreign Minister, Minister of Interior, Ambassador to the United States, and others—all members of the royal family—lied to the world, including on international television, repeatedly changing their story about what happened to Mr. Khashoggi. Perhaps most revealing was how cavalierly and shamelessly they lied, clearly assuming that their lies would be accepted at face value.

According to press reports the impulsive Crown Prince, while disclaiming any involvement in or knowledge of the crime, shortly after Mr. Khashoggi's disappearance referred to him as a "dangerous jihadist," which was also false.

The Saudis have yet to say what happened to Khashoggi's remains, except that they were turned over to a "local collaborator." Who and where is that person? What more are they hiding?

Reports indicate that the Saudis sent a team to Istanbul to destroy evidence of the crime, during the very period when the White House and State Department were insisting that the Saudi Government deserved more time to determine the facts. Instead, the Saudis were trying to cover their tracks.

There is every reason to believe that the Saudi royal family is still lying about who was involved.

We also know that, before murdering Mr. Khashoggi, the Saudi Government has had a long history of abducting, imprisoning, and executing dissidents and others after sham trials in violation of international law.

In the United States, the media's attention, for a time, was diverted by President Trump's racist rants about a so-called migrant invasion, his made-up claims of voter fraud, his partisan lies about Democrats, his steady stream of vitriolic and divisive rhetoric that has incited others to violence here and abroad, premeditated election frenzy, and now its aftermath.

I mention this because, for the past few weeks, the murder of Mr. Khashoggi had been eclipsed by other headlines. No longer. The vote on S.J. Res. 54 is the Senate's initial answer to the Saudi royal family and to the Trump administration.

This crime, on top of everything else, was so wicked, so repulsive, that no amount of money, no amount of oil, and no amount of lies can obscure it.

The Trump administration lobbied hard against the resolution, warning that, despite the Saudi royal family's many transgressions the U.S.-Saudi relationship is too important to risk. No one is seeking to sever relations with Saudi Arabia. But far more important is that the United States stands for the truth, for justice, for the laws of war, and that we don't stand by when top officials of another government, whether ally or adversary, conspire to murder a journalist or dissident and lie about it.

As of today, the Saudi authorities continue to ignore appeals to reveal what happened to Khashoggi's remains. After so many lies, they insist that the 18 men under arrest are the only ones involved in Mr. Khashoggi's murder. No one who knows anything about the Saudi royal family, which controls the Saudi Government with an iron fist, believes that.

President Trump, who has been loath to say anything that might implicate the Saudi royal family, at one point said there would be "very severe" consequences if investigations conclude that the Saudis are responsible. Since then, even as it has become obvious that the Saudis, including the Crown Prince, are responsible, he has said nothing further about what those consequences would be. To the contrary, he said "maybe he was, maybe he wasn't," but either way, it doesn't matter to President Trump.

Secretary Pompeo has said that Saudi Arabia has made a "serious commitment" to hold senior leaders and officials accountable for the murder of Mr. Khashoggi; yet so far, no senior Saudi leader or official has been arrested, and the Saudis appear to have rejected the Turkish Government's demand that the 18 individuals who have been arrested be turned over to face justice where the crime occurred.

According to press reports, the conclusion of U.S. intelligence experts is that such a heinous, premeditated crime by Saudi agents inside the Saudi consulate could not have taken place without the Crown Prince's knowledge and support. Does anyone seriously believe otherwise? Yet yesterday, the CIA Director was barred by the White House from meeting with Senators to answer questions about this. Knowing what we do about this White House, the inescapable conclusion is that whatever she would have told us would have contradicted the President's defense of the Saudi Government.

Despite all the Saudis' phony denials, the President appears disposed to ignore his own intelligence experts and rely instead on the Saudi royal family to investigate itself. Why? To protect billions of dollars in contracts for U.S. weapons purchased by the Saudis for use in Yemen. The White House has apparently concluded that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman will ride out

this storm and remain in power for years to come.

Journalists the world over face unprecedented dangers. Those who criticize corrupt, repressive governments do so at great risk to their own safety and the safety of their families. They are regularly the targets of harassment, threats, and assassination for nothing more than doing their job. If the Saudi royal family can escape punishment for the premeditated murder of a Washington Post journalist, what does that say to journalists everywhere? What does it say about the United States, if we are willing to accept that?

Yesterday, the vote to discharge S.J. Res. 54 showed that we do not and will not accept it. If the Saudi royal family hopes to salvage its tattered reputation and relations with the United States, it will need to take far more decisive action to end the mayhem in Yemen and bring to justice all those responsible for murdering Jamal Khashoggi.

#### REMEMBERING LUIGI TELARA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to Luigi Telara, who passed away earlier this year on April 1. An Italian sculptor who hailed from the marble quarries of Carrara, Italy, Luigi's life was one of hard work, dedication, and beauty. While he spent a majority of his life in Italy, Luigi lived in Proctor, VT, where he worked for the Vermont Marble Company for 6 years. Although his time in America was short, the impact of his work can still be seen today in Vermont, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and even right here in the U.S. Capitol.

Although fostered and honed in his home country, Luigi's love for the art of sculpting spread far beyond his European roots. After attending Professional Institute for Marble, Industry, and Crafts—l'Istituto Professionale per l'Industria e l'Artigianato del Marmo—and later on Magistero d'Arte in Florence, the State of Vermont was lucky enough to become a second home and a source of inspiration for Luigi's grand marblework and refined artistry. He joined the Vermont Marble Company in 1955, where he was able to sculpt pieces we continue to feature here today, on the steps of our Capitol.

It was during his 6 years at the Vermont Marble Company that Luigi Telara made his mark on our great democratic institution with his assistance in the creation of the plaster models of the god of war and goddess of peace statues that stand atop the Capitol steps. "War" is a male figure with his head slightly titled and his gaze fixed ahead, ready to conquer what is ahead of him. To the right of "War" is "Peace," standing in a contrapposto pose, holding a fruit-bearing olive branch in her left hand, extending it towards "War."

Luigi's work should serve as a subtle reminder of what is at stake when you