

still a long way to go—a long way to go. Additional miles of pipeline and specialized train cars are just the beginning. I believe we can do better—much better, in fact—than simply sitting idly by as we watch good fuel being burned off into the night sky.

(Ms. McSALLY assumed the Chair.)

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

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

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, today I wish to speak in support of including provisions in any reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act that would ensure Tribal governments can prosecute heinous crimes on their lands.

When Congress last reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act, also known as VAWA, in 2013, we made historic advancements to address domestic violence on Tribal lands. Those important steps must be preserved, but we must also fix gaps in the law that the last reauthorization left open. These gaps allow crimes against children, the elderly, and law enforcement to essentially go unpunished.

As I have mentioned before, I support H.R. 1585, the bill passed by the House to reauthorize VAWA. One of the reasons I support that bill is because it addresses those gaps. Tribes should be able to address violent crimes that happen on their lands and to their most vulnerable populations.

According to a 2016 Justice Department report, “more than four in five American Indian and Alaska Native women have experienced violence in their lifetime.” That is disturbing. The report also found that 56 percent have experienced sexual violence; 56 percent have experienced physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner; and 49 percent have been stalked.

For me, these numbers are even more upsetting because California has the largest Native American population in the United States. There are almost 700,000 Native Americans living in California, which has 107 federally recognized and 50 unrecognized Tribes.

We must continue to respect Tribal sovereignty, to advance the very core of what sovereignty means: the right of Tribes to exercise dominion and jurisdiction over appalling crimes that occur on Tribal land. For many years, Tribal governments were unable to prosecute crimes committed by non-Indians on Tribal lands. Thankfully, that changed when Congress reauthorized VAWA in 2013.

The 2013 reauthorization of VAWA allowed Tribes to exercise their sovereign powers to prosecute, convict, and sentence both Indians and non-Indians who assault Indian spouses or dating partners. In other words, Tribes were finally able to prosecute anyone who committed domestic violence against an Indian on Indian land. These measures were not only necessary; they worked.

In just 5 years, under these new laws, there were 142 arrests, 74 convictions, and 24 more cases pending. These charges were processed through Tribal courts that provided the requisite due process protections under our Constitution. In fact, not a single conviction was overturned because of a lack of due process. We must now build on that success.

The VAWA reauthorization the House passed is a strong bill. I would note that it passed on a significant bipartisan basis, with a vote of 263-158 and 33 Republicans supporting it. This was even in the face of an active opposition campaign conducted by the National Rifle Association.

But importantly, one of the reasons the House bill is a strong bill is because of its Tribal protections. For example, the House bill expands jurisdiction over non-Indians for crimes against children, elders, and law enforcement.

We have a duty to prevent child abuse and elder abuse wherever they occur. It is also only right that Tribes be able to prosecute attacks on law enforcement officers. The people who protect the public deserve protection as well.

These advancements ensure that Tribes are able to address acts of violence, while respecting Tribal sovereignty. We should welcome the opportunity to continue to build on our past successes. I look forward to working with my colleague Senator ERNST on these provisions and hope other Senators with significant stake in this area will join us.

There are several other provisions that I believe should be included in a VAWA reauthorization. Chief among those is keeping guns out of the hands of domestic abusers. I plan to speak about those provisions at a later date, but I mention them now because I believe that we must have a comprehensive approach to addressing domestic violence in this country.

Simply put, all of the different parts of VAWA are linked. For instance, ensuring Tribal governments can prosecute domestic violence committed on Tribal lands is important, but keeping guns out of the hands of domestic abusers will help protect victims on Tribal lands as well.

The bill passed by the House takes this sort of comprehensive approach by, for example, improving the law in the areas of housing, Tribal protections, and gun safety.

I believe the Senate must do the same. There is no simple way to stop

domestic violence, but we have a duty to do all that we can. Thank you.

### NOMINATION OF JANET DHILLON

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, today I wish to speak on the nomination of Janet Dhillon, who is nominated to be Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The EEOC plays an important role in protecting American workers. I am deeply concerned that Ms. Dhillon will put the interests of corporations over those of employees, which is antithetical to the mission of the EEOC.

The EEOC is charged with “enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person’s race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.” It also investigates claims of individuals who are retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. Needless to say, the EEOC plays a critical role in protecting American workers and ensuring that our Federal anti-discrimination laws are enforced and not disregarded by unscrupulous employers.

In choosing someone to sit on the Commission, it is critical that the administration select someone with a history of working to advance civil rights and workers’ rights. Ms. Dhillon clearly does not have that background.

Ms. Dhillon has spent the vast majority of her career working for and representing the interests of large corporations. Notably, while she was employed at JC Penney, the company was harshly criticized for its handling of a garment factory accident in Bangladesh that killed more than 1,000 people. She also worked at the Retail Litigation Center, an entity that works to limit employees’ and consumers’ access to justice. These experiences stand in direct opposition to the mission of the EEOC.

Additionally, during her confirmation hearing, she would not commit to maintaining the EEOC’s current position that title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects LGBT people from discrimination. As one of the main authors of the Equality Act in the Senate, which clarifies that existing civil rights law forbids discrimination of LGBT people, I am deeply concerned Ms. Dhillon would not make that commitment at her hearing.

If the United States is going to be a beacon of liberty and freedom, we must not allow discrimination of any kind to continue. The EEOC plays an essential role in fulfilling that promise of eradicating discrimination and creating a workplace that reflects the best of American values: hard work, ingenuity, decency, and respect.

It is clear to me that Ms. Dhillon is not the right person for the job, and I urge my colleagues to vote against her nomination.