

to discharge Senate Joint Resolutions 20 and 26, which sought to block the sales of certain weapons to Bahrain and Qatar respectively.

As many of you know, I have long been a champion of a U.S. foreign policy driven by our values and respect for human rights. This applies to our foreign military support and arms sales. We must ensure that our military might and weapons only go to support partners and allies who uphold our values. We have both a moral and a national security obligation to ensure that U.S. weapons, equipment, and training are never used to harm civilians, abuse human rights, or end up in the hands of enemies who seek to do us harm.

With that in mind, I was pleased to lead the Enhancing Human Rights in Arms Sales Act of 2019 with my colleagues from both sides of the aisle. This bipartisan legislation would put into place strict vetting criteria and end use monitoring for certain weapons sales to prevent U.S.-provided weapons from going to governments who commit human rights abuses and war crimes. I urge all of my colleagues to support this important and necessary legislation.

Until my bill is enacted into law and its critical safeguards are in place, it is incumbent upon Congress to evaluate each arms sale with important considerations for civilian security and human rights.

I have carefully examined both of the sales before us today, and applied the same criteria outlined in the Enhancing Human Rights in Arms Sales Act.

Through this lens, I was compelled to vote in favor of discharging S.J. Res. 20, so the Senate could debate the pending sale of various bombs and precision-guided munitions to Bahrain. Domestically, Bahrain's Ministry of Interior police forces were responsible for the repression of the 2011 uprising, and well over 100 Bahrainis have been killed in the course of repressing the Shia-led unrest. In the Yemen conflict, the Bahrain Air Force is participating in Saudi-led coalition airstrikes that have led to civilian casualties. This pending sale would in fact provide munitions for Bahrain's F-16 aircraft, which would almost certainly be used in Yemen. We know this because Air Vice Marshall Hamad bin Abdullah al Khalifah, head of the Royal Bahraini Air Force—RBAF—stated in February 2019 that Royal Bahraini Air Force F-16s had conducted over 3,500 sorties, or combat aircraft flights, since the beginning of the campaign in March 2015. With 3,500 sorties in Yemen, we have to assume that Bahrain is responsible for some of the civilian deaths caused by the coalition airstrikes in Yemen. I have repeatedly voiced my opposition to U.S. support for the war in Yemen, and we cannot risk our weapons leading to further repression in Bahrain itself. I cannot support the sale of U.S. weapons to Bahrain at this time.

The case of the pending sales to Qatar is quite different. There is no doubt that Qatar has significant

human rights challenges, particularly with respect to its labor practices. That said, I have not seen any evidence of the Qatari Government using arms against its people. Moreover, Qatar's involvement in the Yemeni war was limited to primarily defending the Saudi border from the Houthis, not conducting airstrikes in Yemen. The Qataris left the Saudi-led coalition entirely 2 years ago. Qatar has proven itself an important and responsible partner for the United States. The Qatar Air Force flew strikes, alongside the U.S. and other partners, against the Islamic State in Syria in 2014 and 2015. It also flew strikes against Qadhafi in Libya in 2011, but again, this was in concert with international partners including the United States. In light of these factors, I voted against discharging S.J. Res. 26.

While both discharge motions failed, this issue will not go away because one thing that we all can agree on is that no U.S. arms should ever be linked to the deaths of innocent civilians. No U.S. arms should ever be used to intimidate and destroy the defenseless. No U.S. arms should ever end up in the hands of a child soldier or a terrorist. We may disagree on policy, but our values will always bridge the partisan divide. That is why Congress and the administration must take a more holistic look at this issue. My bipartisan bill, the Enhancing Human Rights in Arms Sales Act of 2019, offers a comprehensive approach, and I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

S. 1749

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. President, I rise today regarding the U.S. Senate's passage of S. 1749, the Protecting Affordable Mortgages for Veterans Act, by unanimous consent. The Protecting Affordable Mortgages for Veterans Act aims to preserve access to affordable VA mortgages for the millions of veterans and brave men and women in uniform in Arizona and around the country.

Last year, Congress passed S. 2155, the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act, a bipartisan regulatory relief package for community financial institutions. Among other issues, this package sought to crack down on "mortgage churning," a predatory practice wherein lenders push veterans over and over to repeatedly refinance their home, even when there is no clear benefit to doing so. With each refinance, the lenders take a fee. Veterans, on the other hand, enter into a cycle of debt where fees and interest rates cost more than the initial mortgage payments.

To stop these predatory lenders and the practice of churning, S. 2155 put into place new requirements that must be met in order for a refinanced loan to obtain VA guaranty and securitization from Ginnie Mae, the U.S. Government corporation that helps lenders make more affordable mortgages to veterans, first-time home buyers, and low-income borrowers.

Unfortunately, these new requirements were inconsistent with Ginnie Mae loan seasoning requirements. With implementation of reform, the new rules left approximately 2,500 VA-guaranteed loans ineligible for Ginnie Mae pooling, a move which seriously constrained lending.

The unintended consequence of this measure put VA home loans out of reach and threatened to drive up future borrowing costs. The Protecting Affordable Mortgages for Veterans Act would correct this issue and maintain liquidity in the veteran home loan market so that veterans and their families can secure the safe, affordable housing they deserve.

When they return home, veterans who defend our freedom with dignity and honor should receive the thanks of a grateful nation and opportunities to succeed as they transition to civilian life. That means delivering quality care at the VA, improving job and education opportunities, and ensuring affordable housing is within reach for Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Acclimating to civilian life is challenging enough without the threat of being scammed by predatory lenders.

I want to thank my colleague from North Carolina, Senator TILLIS, for working with me over the last several weeks to craft this bill. I also want to thank Chairman CRAPO, Ranking Member BROWN, Chairman ISAKSON, and Ranking Member TESTER for their steadfast support in moving this fix expeditiously. Even in an era of divided government and historic gridlock, we are getting things done for Arizona.

Now that this legislation has passed the U.S. Senate, I urge my colleagues in the House to quickly pass S. 1749 so it can be signed into law. Let's keep working together, Democrats and Republicans, to stand up for our veterans.

Thank you.

REMEMBERING PRIVATE WILLIAM TULLY BROWN

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, Today I wish to honor Private William Tully Brown, a Navajo code talker who never considered himself an American hero but who was.

Private Brown enlisted in the Marines in 1944 and was trained as a code talker at Camp Pendleton. Training was intense. The code talkers underwent extensive training in communications and in memorizing the complex code that included Navajo words used for 450 military terms that didn't exist in the Navajo or Dine language.

Private Brown was part of the Second Marine Division. In July 1945, he shipped out of San Diego to Pearl Harbor, then to Saipan in the Mariana Islands, and finally to Nagasaki and Sasebo on the island of Kyushu, Japan's most southern main island. They landed in Nagasaki's harbor on September