

For many years, this critical legislation was stalled because of the concerns of some Members that any reform to the employment-based visa system should be accompanied by new protections against fraud and abuse in the H-1B program. To address those concerns this Congress, I negotiated an amendment to the Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act with Senator GRASSLEY to include new protections for American workers in how we process applications for H-1B visas.

This amendment negotiated with Senator GRASSLEY does three things: First, the Grassley amendment would strengthen the Department of Labor's ability to investigate and enforce labor condition application requirements. In addition, it would reform the labor condition application process to ensure complete and adequate disclosure of information regarding the employer's H-1B hiring practices. Finally, it would close loopholes by which employers could otherwise circumvent the annual cap on H-1B workers.

Importantly, the Grassley amendment—like the underlying bill itself—consists of provisions that have long enjoyed support from Members of this body on both sides of the aisle and from every point along the ideological spectrum. They are drawn from an H-1B reform bill that has been championed both by Senator GRASSLEY and by Senator DURBIN.

I am grateful that Senator GRASSLEY was willing to come to the table and work in good faith on achieving a reasonable compromise on this bill. I believe the deal we have struck is a fair and evenhanded way to address longstanding concerns about our H-1B system while eliminating country-of-origin discrimination in how we allocate skills-based green cards.

The reason the Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act enjoys such broad, solemn, deep, and unwavering bipartisan support is because it does not include any of the typical partisan poison pills and other controversial provisions that so often undermine and in many cases doom other immigration reform efforts. This is a narrow, surgical reform—one that is necessary, one that is palatable, and one that is long overdue.

I would like to conclude by thanking Senator HARRIS, who has been an indefatigable partner with me on this bill. I have been proud to work side by side with her to eliminate the country-of-origin discrimination and bring about a system of fairness in how we allocate employment-based green cards.

This is an important and, indeed, essential reform to our immigration laws and one that has been a long time coming.

Mr. President, I therefore ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 386 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I ask unanimous consent that the Grassley amendment at

the desk be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Reserving the right to object, I have offered a modest compromise amendment to this legislation. I stand ready and open to negotiate and discuss this. We have often discussed it in private and in public. I will object until we can get to negotiating terms, and we can hopefully pass this bill once we enter into a dialogue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I approach with great sadness and disappointment the response just brought about by my distinguished colleague, my friend, the junior Senator from Kentucky. I have a great deal of respect for him. The fact that he and I have worked on so many issues side by side together in order to improve government makes this not easier but makes it more difficult.

The reforms to which my distinguished colleague, the junior Senator from Kentucky, refers are themselves born of a genuine desire to improve our immigration system. But, alas, the reforms he has proposed are not, in my view, compatible with the scope of this bill, nor are they compatible with something that can reasonably pass through this body. That is one of the reasons I have introduced the legislation as I have.

I worked on this nearly the entirety of the 8½ half years I have had the opportunity and great privilege to serve the people of Utah in the Senate. This is by far the closest we have ever come to having a deal, and we achieved that deal by keeping this bill focused on the very things this legislation deals with.

The suggestions that Senator PAUL has made, while born of great concern for our country and a noble degree of commitment to serving the people of his State, are not themselves compatible with the scope of this legislation, nor are they compatible with what would likely be passed by this body.

We have an opportunity right now to pass this. This could pass this body right now. I find it greatly disappointing that my colleague and my friend has chosen not to allow this to pass this body today. This is something that could and should and otherwise would pass this body today without that objection.

I would respectfully but with all the urgency I am capable of communicating implore my colleague, the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, to reconsider his objection and allow this to pass.

I yield the floor.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 883 TO S. 1790

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to call up Udall amendment No. 883.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Mexico [Mr. UDALL], for himself and others, proposes an amendment numbered 883 to S. 1790, as amended.

Mr. UDALL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment, as amended, is as follows:

(Purpose: To prohibit unauthorized military operations in or against Iran)

At the end of subtitle C of title XII of the amendment, add the following:

SEC. 1226. PROHIBITION OF UNAUTHORIZED MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST IRAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—No funds authorized by this Act may be used to conduct hostilities against the Government of Iran, against the Armed Forces of Iran, or in the territory of Iran.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section may be construed—

(1) to restrict the use of the United States Armed Forces to defend against an attack upon the United States, its territories or possessions, or its Armed Forces;

(2) to limit the obligations under the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1541 et seq.); or

(3) to affect the provisions of an Act or a joint resolution of Congress specifically authorizing such hostilities that is enacted after the date of the enactment of this Act.

Mr. UDALL. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak on my amendment.

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

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I rise to respond to some of the criticisms of the Udall amendment that I believe are misleading and deserve a response.

To start, I want to point out an area of agreement. The opposition says our amendment is simple, and it agrees on its intent—that this amendment would prohibit a war with Iran without there being congressional approval, and that is what the vote is about. The arguments from those in the opposition mislead to avoid that simple truth. They are trying to create excuses for why we should ignore the Constitution and open the door to war with Iran without having a vote. President

Trump has said he was 10 minutes away from doing just that.

Here is some of what we have heard. Critics say we only have one Commander in Chief, not 535, and so we should not pass this amendment.

We agree. We only have one Commander in Chief, but the Commander in Chief executes wars. Only Congress can declare them. Our Founders made that decision for good reason. Dictators and Kings declare war unilaterally. Democracies don't. In our democracy, the people decide whether we go to war or whether we don't go to war through their elected representatives. Congress is the most direct voice of the people.

Once that decision has been made, then it is up to one Commander in Chief to execute that war. The people of New Mexico did not send me here to be a battalion commander or a general, and I have no intention of acting like one. The people of New Mexico sent me here to do my constitutional duty, and article I, section 8 vests the power of declaring war with the Congress.

Critics also falsely say our amendment limits our forces' ability to defend themselves or take incoming fire before they can respond. The majority leader said our amendment defines "self-defense" too narrowly.

I am confused at what he is referring to. Our amendment does not include a separate definition of "self-defense." Our amendment expressly states that it does not restrict "the use of the United States Armed Forces to defend against attack." This language does not, in any way, change the Department of Defense's rules of engagement that guide how to exercise our inherent right of self-defense. The DOD does not require a unit to absorb an attack before it can defend itself, and neither does our amendment.

The only restriction in the amendment is that the President cannot enter into hostilities without having congressional approval. It is a restriction that is embedded in our Constitution. If the Republicans are proposing to do away with that restriction, I agree with my colleague Senator MERKLEY that they must come to the floor and propose a constitutional amendment to do so.

Our forces in Iraq, Bahrain, and other locations in the Middle East are fully capable and empowered to defend themselves, and this amendment does not affect that. Unfortunately, the opposition is just repeating itself, trying to generate a reason to abdicate its own constitutional duty.

We have also heard criticism that this amendment is "appeasing the Ayatollahs" and represents "weakness" and that we must allow the President to launch military action to be tough.

We have heard these kinds of arguments before. They were very common in the run up to the disastrous Iraq war. Do not question the arguments for war. To do so is to be weak.

I could not disagree more.

Our Constitution is our strength, and this amendment simply reaffirms our

Constitution in the face of a President who is threatening to flout it. Our Nation is strong when we are united. We do not need to give up congressional authority over war and peace to one man, the President, in order to be strong.

Congress has authorized military action before, and when majorities believe that the circumstances warrant it, Congress will do so again. If we fear Iran so much that we are willing to walk away from the constitutional requirements to authorize military action, that would be the real sign of weakness.

We have also heard that we cannot rely on Congress to authorize force if we need it to. We heard that Congress can barely name a post office. So how can we trust it with this kind of decision? What if Congress is out of town and cannot vote?

First, it is disappointing to hear Members of the Senate speak so cynically about this body on the floor during a debate as important as this. The Congress does not function perfectly. That is very true. Yet history is clear that Congress has authorized military force many times in the past. I have supported some, and I have opposed others, but we had debates and votes. Only recently has the 2001 authorization been so abused to authorize military action all over the globe—far beyond the al-Qaida and Afghanistan mission that Congress thought it was voting on.

Congress, though, has had these debates and has voted, and those decisions represent our national decisions. I see no reason to turn our back on our Constitution just because Iran is a regional threat and this administration has manufactured a crisis to exacerbate that threat.

If there is a national security crisis that requires Congress to vote on military force, we can all get on a plane and come to Washington and do our jobs. Maybe we will even have a vote on Friday. Congress voted after Pearl Harbor, and Congress voted after 9/11. Both were in the middle of national crises. Our troops will be the ones making real sacrifices. We can bear the cost of some inconvenient recess travel. Our job is to debate and vote on matters of war and peace—period, end of story.

We have also heard that the Department of Defense is opposed to our amendment.

Yesterday, Mr. John Rood, the Under Secretary for Policy at the Department of Defense, sent a letter to the leaders of the Armed Services Committee in its opposition to our amendment. The letter is short, and while it contains speculation and rhetoric, it includes no legal analysis and fails to address the plain language of the amendment or longstanding DOD authority or rules of engagement.

I am disappointed in the letter, but it should not be a surprise from a political appointee from the Trump admin-

istration, not when the President is openly declaring that he needs no authority from Congress to launch a war against Iran. The letter reads that the amendment "purports to limit the President's authority in discharging his responsibility as Commander in Chief," which is simply false.

The amendment straightforwardly affirms the constitutional authority of Congress to authorize military action—authority that the President is openly flouting in his public comments.

If Congress authorizes military action against Iran, the Commander in Chief would be free to execute it.

The letter asserts, without evidence, that our amendment will embolden Iran. I hope we are not so weak that we think our Constitution emboldens Iran.

Overall, the letter cites nothing—the Constitution, no law, no DOD policy, no legal analysis, nothing—in support of its claims.

This letter from DOD, which lacks a confirmed Secretary, is a disappointment, but it should not be read as any authoritative take on this amendment, its intent, or its effect.

Some have said that this amendment would block the United States from helping Israel defend itself from an Iranian attack. I support Israel's right to defend itself, and this argument does not hold up.

First, this amendment has no impact on our ongoing security assistance and cooperation with Israel, including the recent MOU signed with Israel by President Obama.

Second, if Israel is attacked, there is nothing in this amendment that would prohibit the United States from coming to its aid with defensive measures.

Third, if Israel is attacked and the United States wants to send our military to engage in direct hostilities, we are going to need to debate and authorize any response in Congress. That is simply what the Constitution says.

Finally, the biggest risk of Iranian attacks on Israel, according to one Israeli Cabinet Minister last month, is the escalating tension between the United States and Iran.

The best thing we can do to protect Israel is diplomacy to stop a broader regional war in the Middle East. If the United States does go to war with Iran, Israel is likely to face very serious threats, and that is something we should take seriously if we consider the use of force.

Israeli Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz said in May that "things are heating up" in the Persian Gulf.

He said:

If there's some sort of conflagration between Iran and the United States, between Iran and its neighbors, I'm not ruling out that they will activate Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad from Gaza, or even that they will try to fire missiles from Iran at the State of Israel.

So the threats to Israel from Iran only make it more important that we have a full debate and vote on military action, not less important.

Again, the purpose of our amendment is simple: The President is threatening to launch military action against Iran without authorization, publicly flouting Congress. This amendment says that we are not going to go into an unauthorized war with Iran.

If the President and Members of this body think we need to take military action against Iran, then let's have that debate and let's vote.

The Udall amendment ensures we follow the constitutional process. To do otherwise is to be in dereliction of our constitutional duty.

Mr. ROMNEY. Will the Senator from New Mexico yield for a question?

Mr. UDALL. The Senator from New Mexico yields the floor.

Mr. ROMNEY. Mr. President, I very much appreciate the perspective and sincere thoughts and ideas coming from my good friend from New Mexico.

The Senator indicated that those who oppose this are trying to create excuses for why we should ignore the Constitution.

I would note that in my remarks this morning I noted specifically that this is not an authorization to use military force against Iran or anyone else. It is a statement of continued commitment to our national defense, and, precisely, it is saying that under the Constitution only Congress may declare war. That is something I said specifically.

But the Senator goes on to note—he says that only the Congress—specifically, his words are “ignore the Constitution, open the door to war with Iran without a vote.”

President Trump has said he was 10 minutes away from doing just that. Is the Senator saying that if the President were to do what he was contemplating, and that is to take out missile batteries with the potential of the loss of life of as many as 150, but also it could be with a prewarning, with no loss of life, but taking out missile batteries that have fired upon an American aircraft—unmanned American aircraft—if he were to have done that in response to their shooting down an aircraft in international airspace, that constitutes going to war and would have required a vote of Congress to authorize shooting down or attacking missile batteries that have fired rockets at an American airship?

I am referring to the Senator's comments precisely, and I will read the entire point.

The Senator said: “They are trying to create excuses for why we should ignore the Constitution and open the door to war with Iran without a vote.”

President Trump has said that he was 10 minutes away from doing just that. So in the Senator's view, is responding in a very limited manner, as he was contemplating, taking out missile batteries potentially—would that have constituted going to war and required the vote of Congress?

That is my question, because I believe that is not the case. I believe the President has the constitutional au-

thority and duty to respond, if necessary, in an appropriate way to return fire on the very batteries that have shot down an American aircraft.

I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO BLAIR BRETTSCHEIDER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to tell you about two young women from Chicago and a discovery they made together that has helped to transform the lives of hundreds of other young women.

Domitira Nahishakiye moved with her family from the African nation of Burundi to Chicago in 2007. Three years later, she found herself overwhelmed. At 18, she was attending high school, trying to prepare for college, and caring for her three younger siblings.

The refugee resettlement efforts worked mostly with boys and young men. It didn't offer many programs to help Domi balance the pressures of caring for her siblings and preparing for college. Getting ready for college is tough for almost everyone. Imagine how much harder it is if you have grown up in another culture and you are helping to care for three siblings.

Fortunately, Domi met another young woman named Blair Brettschneider.

Blair grew up in Detroit. After graduating from the University of Miami in Florida, she had hoped to become a journalist, but the Great Recession caused Blair to rethink her career path. She moved to Chicago to work for AmeriCorps VISTA, sometimes called the domestic Peace Corps. Blair was a “gofer” for the refugee resettlement agency.

Not content with coffee runs and other “busy work,” Blair started talking to the families her agency was helping. That is how she met Domi.

Blair started to tutor Domi and help her with her homework at the after-school center, but Domi's home responsibilities made it difficult for her to attend the sessions regularly.

Rather than give up, Blair started tutoring Domi at her home. She helped her master her studies and apply for college. She also helped Domi adapt to life in her new homeland.

Blair realized that Domi was not alone. Many immigrant girls and young women Blair spoke with shared the same needs, and many refugee agencies just weren't set up to help them.

That realization led Blair to establish a foundation in 2011 to provide other young women refugees in Chicagoland with the same types of support that Blair offered Domi. It is called GirlForward. It has since expanded its reach to help young women in Austin, TX, as well. Since 2011, GirlForward has helped nearly 300 refugee women in the Chicago area and in Austin find mentors, friends, support, and encouragement in America.

Amina Imran, a refugee from Pakistan, is one of those fortunate young

women. She used to joke that the only way she could attend college is if she robbed a bank, but after finishing the Chicago GirlForward program in 2017, she now attends North Park University in Chicago, on a scholarship.

GirlForward is routinely cited as one of the best charities in Chicago. Reader's Digest declared GirlForward the Best of America.

My visits to GirlForward in Chicago were some of the happiest moments on my schedule. Young women from every corner of the world found friendship and encouragement with their peers. The processes of assimilating language and culture were lifted as these amazing young women came together and shared their struggles and joys.

In helping young women refugees to thrive in their new home, Blair Brettschneider is following in the footsteps of another great Chicagoan. In 1889, Jane Addams founded Hull House on the Near West Side of Chicago. It was one of America's first settlement houses, where new citizens could acquire domestic and job skills and learn about American Government and customs. For her work with Hull House and other social justice causes, Jane Addams became the first American woman ever to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

GirlForward is a new version of Hull House.

In July, Blair will be leaving GirlForward. Fortunately, she leaves the GirlForward programs in Chicagoland and in Austin in strong shape.

On behalf of the hundreds of young women whose lives GirlForward has helped enrich and transform and the hundreds of young women who will follow them, I want to thank Blair Brettschneider for her remarkable work and wish her all the best in her new efforts.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, today I wish to discuss Senate amendment No. 861, offered by our colleague from Utah.

The author of the amendment, Senator ROMNEY, and others have made clear that this language does not constitute an authorization of the use of military force, or AUMF. I agree with that assessment.

While this amendment appears to restate existing Presidential authority to defend the country in the event of an attack, it includes other language that could be interpreted to provide more authority to the President. That concerns me, which is why I voted against this amendment.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, amendment No. 861 fully captures the utter failure of the modern Congress to assert and defend congressional war powers that the U.S. Constitution solely vests in the legislative branch. It treats matters of life and death as mere fodder for political “gotcha”