As if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate Armed Services Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 1520 and the Senate proceed to its consideration; that there be 2 hours of debate equally divided in the usual form; and that upon the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the bill with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REED. Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Madam President, once again, I object to the request from the Senator from New York for the reasons I have previously stated, and I will repeat again what I have said publicly and what I have committed to.

I support removing prosecution of sexual assault, the types of crimes that Senator GILLIBRAND discussed, from the chain of command. But her bill goes further to include crimes not related to sexual assault. The removal of sexual assault crimes from the chain of command will be an historic change in the military justice system and one which Senator GILLIBRAND can claim great responsibility for effecting. We must take care, however, that we do it thoughtfully, in a manner that does not break the military justice system.

The worst thing we can do to victims of sexual assault is to move a bill through that can't be implemented effectively or on time, creates too large a workload for too few qualified military judge advocates, imperils prosecutions, leads to convictions being overturned on appeal, or results in neglected cases because the necessary attention cannot be devoted to them.

According to the Department of Defense, the number of full-time colonels, lawyer disposition authorities required to execute the system as proposed, which would take effect 180 days from enactment, exceeds the number of judge advocates in that senior grade. And this doesn't account for her bill's requirement that these O–6 judge advocates have significant trial and criminal law experience or that they would not then be available for other important assignments reserved for O–6s, such as military judges and division, corps, or combatant command judge advocates.

The heads of the service Judge Advocate General's Corps have previously raised concerns about the implementation timeline, the resources necessary to execute, and a host of other inconsistencies with the current system that would have to be addressed to be sure of successful implementation. These are the very military lawyers that Senator GILLIBRAND's bill would empower to make prosecutorial decisions, which includes an evaluation of a far greater number of cases than simply those that end up in court-martial. These are the issues that we need discuss in the committee and not dispose of in an amendment on the floor. The committee will do this and do it faithfully. And I am very confident that we will be able to move legislation that does remove any crimes related to sexual misconduct from the current command to a system that Senator GILLIBRAND is proposing.

With that, I would reiterate my objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. As you heard from the chairman of the committee, he only intends on taking one crime out of the chain of command, and that is sexual assault. And the reason why that is so problematic is, No. 1, it will continue to undermine women in the military, marginalize them and isolate them, creating a ''pink court'' that all legal experts have agreed would be highly ineffective and would harm the military justice system.

Second, our allies have already made this move. They have taken all serious crimes out of the chain of command and given it to trained military prosecutors in the UK, Israel, Germany, Netherlands, and Australia. In those instances, they did it specifically for defendants' rights. And we have a similar problem in this country because right now we have a great deal of racial bias in who gets punished.

If you are Black or Brown in the U.S. military today, you are 2.5 times more likely to be punished. And most commanders are White commanders. There is further data that shows most Black and Brown servicemembers have either experienced or witnessed racism within the ranks.

If we want to fix this criminal justice system, you need a bright line, and it should be at all serious crimes. That is how we fix the military justice system. That is how we give justice to sexual assault survivors.

And for the chairman to say today that it would cost too much money or that they don't have sufficient resources or sufficient lawyers, it isn't true. And those are the same arguments that were used over the last 8 years about excluding sexual assault from the chain of command as well.

So I don't think these are legitimate arguments. I think they are brought up year after year as just a way to put an impediment in front of the reform that is needed to fix the system.

I now yield the floor to my colleague Senator GRASSLEY.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Senator GILLIBRAND, as 1 of the 65 other cosponsors of this legislation, I think you are to be commended for every day coming to the floor, to be as consistent in being for this legislation as you have been since 2013. And every one of us thank you for your persistence. You need to be congratulated. And all the people who have been harmed by sexual assaults over the last decades owe you a great deal of gratitude for that.

So I am here to join Senator GILLIBRAND in asking for a vote on this crucial legislation. And, obviously, today we aren't going to get it, but eventually it is going to happen. You can't say no to 66 Senators that want this legislation. The Military Justice Improvement and Increasing Prevention Act has that many bipartisan cosponsors, and it is past time for this bill to become law.

This legislation was first introduced by Senator GILLIBRAND and me and other Senators 8 years ago and has gained more and more support each year. Senators who previously were skeptical have come around and realized that the Department of Defense can't handle the pervasive problems of sexual assault on their own.

The Armed Services Committee and the Department of Defense have had more than enough time to consider this idea. They have told us that they have it under control and tried other approaches. Those approaches have not worked. Women and men in the military continue to face high rates of sexual assault and retaliation. It is clear this bill is needed.

By moving the decision to prosecute out of the chain of command, perpetrators of sexual assault and other serious crimes will be held accountable. Survivors will have more confidence in the process. Retaliation will be less likely. We have been waiting almost a decade. There is no need any longer to wait. I urge my colleagues to allow this bill to move forward today. And, obviously, it isn't going to move forward today, but Senator GILLIBRAND will be back here tomorrow, asking the same thing. And I applaud you for doing that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

UTAH

Mr. LEE. Madam President, 100 years ago, in 1921, a young and newly married couple named Percy and Verabel Knudson saw the need for a gathering place in their community. Knowing they could make money selling ice cream and candy, they started Idle Isle Ice Cream and Candy Store.

A few years later, after raising the necessary funds, Percy and Verabel Knudson—with the help of David H. Call and his wife LaRita—shifted their business from sweets to full-service meals, and Idle Isle Cafe was born.

Over the course of the last century, Idle Isle Cafe has endured remarkable events in history and served important people. It survived the difficulties of the Great Depression and World War II, all while serving locals and national celebrities alike, including Wallace Beery, Charlie Chaplin, Clark Gable, Carole Lombard, and Paulette Goddard.

During the fifties, Idle Isle even served ''The Duke'' himself, Mr. John Wayne, who stopped in on a number of occasions while visiting Utah on hunting trips and movie shoots.

In those years, the cafe also served as a meeting place for members of the Brigham City unit of the Utah National Guard, who were later called to

serve their country in the Korean war. Idle Isle Cafe has endured both good times and bad over the last century. But whatever the times, it has always been a place where people from every walk of life could share a meal, enjoy friendship, and bear one another's burdens as they endured the ups and downs of life together.

As the cafe celebrates its 100-year anniversary this year, it is worth recognizing all the good that it has done for Utah and for Brigham City. Of course, bearing one another's burdens is one of the things that Utahns do best.

Travis and Jana Porter, the current owners of Idle Isle Cafe, epitomized this spirit. Everyone who befriends or works with the Porters quickly sees their love of community and their dedication to their country. Nearly everything they do, both inside of the restaurant and outside, stems from their passion for helping others and their optimistic outlook on life.

Even with their five kids and the business of running the restaurant, the couple finds intentional time each day to love and serve those who work in the cafe and all who come to visit. As a result of their service, Idle Isle Cafe endures.

We, as Utahns, are engaged in the work of enduring together. In fact, the State's economy is so robust, in large part, because neighbors care for neighbors, friends care for friends, and strangers even look out for strangers. It doesn't matter who you are. In Utah, you belong. Whether in the cafe or the community, there is a place for you at the table. Our doors are open. So, too, are our hearts. You see, Utah is one of these places where it doesn't matter how long your family has been in the State or whether you have been here for 5 minutes; to us, you are a Utahn.

The endearing spirit of Utah is not inspired by government. No, it is inspired by moms and dads, teachers, small business owners, friends, and neighbors.

Earlier this year, when neighbors in West Valley City were overwhelmed at the prospect of revamping and reclaiming their community, an opportunity presented itself. Aging homes, with peeling paint and cracked up driveways, broken fences, and neglected yards, needed to be refinished. So in typical Utah fashion, neighbors came together.

After identifying problems, reviewing resources, and communicating with community leaders, an initiative was born—Operation My Hometown. Operation My Hometown is a neighborhood improvement coalition made up of residents, city workers, and volunteers from various churches and other organizations. It runs entirely on private initiative and volunteerism, two of Utah's hallmark strengths. Their process is simple: see something in need of repair, note it and join the group to help fix it and then, of course, fix it.

Repair requests can be submitted online, and anyone can help. The projects are significant. And, quite remarkably, they are being completed. To quote one news report:

> Six days a week, the church is converting its meetinghouse in the neighborhood into a community center. Corporations are donating cash and goods. A new park is planned. The city is adding street lights. Funds are being raised to finance home ownership. And volunteers are streaming in from all over the Salt Lake Valley to work side by side with residents.

Neighborhood resident, Bonnie Shaw, stated:

> I am so encouraged, so hopeful, so blessed, I can't even believe this is happening.

Another resident, Nickolaus Orwin, shared, as follows:

> We live in a strange world these days. We hear this ideology that if you don't look like me, talk like me, act like me and vote like me, then we must be enemies, but throughout all of this social upheaval . . . this community has worked together and served one another in such a brilliant and beautiful way that it just defies the ideology that we're different and we have to segregate ourselves out into groups. Even in the dark days of COVID . . . this community service was such a bright, shiny star. Through all of that hard, we have this, this really beautiful and safe community service that was happening.

It has been said that ''the greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.'' If that is the case, then Utah is truly a great place.

To honor this tradition of greatness, I myself am grateful to host the annual Flavors of Utah event in partnership with Operation My Hometown in West Valley City later this summer. My office has partnered with this and other great community groups to collect food from local producers and distribute it to those in need. I encourage other Utahns to join me in this effort as we together look for opportunity to thrive.

The spirit of Utah, the enduring spirit of Utah, is borne from a rich history of hard work, industry, innovation, and ingenuity—even against great hardship. Few individuals embody this spirit more than the late Obert Clark Tanner.

Born in Farmington, UT, in 1904, O.C. Tanner was the youngest of 10 children. Despite his position in the family, from a young age, Tanner felt an obligation to provide for his family. He did so by performing odd jobs around the city, including stoking furnaces. One of the people for whom Tanner stoked the furnace was a jeweler. The jeweler became a friend and a mentor to Tanner and, with time, schooled the young Tanner in the jewelry business. Tanner was a quick study. He swiftly implemented the lessons taught to him and began selling graduation pins and class rings from the back of his car.

In 1927, he officially founded the O.C. Tanner Company. Though still an undergraduate student at the University of Utah, he used what little time he had outside of his classwork to make ends meet—and make ends meet, he did. The company quickly grew and endured the difficulties that put others out of business.

Throughout the years, the enduring spirit of O.C. Tanner has been a guiding light and inspiration to many, and the company has achieved truly great heights.

In 2002, the O.C. Tanner Company crafted the medals for the Winter Olympics, which were hosted in Salt Lake City. In 2019, O.C. Tanner designed a copper spike replica of the original golden spike that was ceremonially driven at the joining of the two branches of the first transcontinental railroad.

Today, the O.C. Tanner Company maintains offices in the United States, Canada, England, Singapore, Australia, and India. The company is one of the largest manufacturers of retail and corporate awards in the United States, and it employs over 1,500 people.

Through the dark nights of hardship, O.C. Tanner has endured and even succeeded, thrived. Through the difficulties of community building, the volunteers of Operation MyHometown endure, and they are succeeding.

Through 100 years of historic highs and unforgettable lows, the Idle Isle Cafe endures and, yes, the cafe is succeeding too. As goes the saying, those who endure conquer.

Similar to O.C. Tanner, volunteers of Operation MyHometown, the Idle Isle Cafe, and all Utahns have endured the difficulties of the last year with utmost faith and fortitude, and they are emerging victorious. The enduring spirit of Utah is strong.

The 2020 pandemic, earthquakes, civic discord, confusion, and contention presented daunting challenges in the lives of all, and yet Utahns are breathing a collective sigh of relief as we embrace the shining horizon that lies yet ahead.

Since the onset of the virus over a year ago, Utahns have seen near-continual drop in unemployment. Utah's unemployment rate fell to 2.8 percent in April—less than half the national number.

Though earthquakes shook homes and businesses last year, Utah's economy has still been rated the best in the United States by several nationally recognized outlets. And while the discord, confusion, and contention seem to dominate the airwaves, Utah's citizens have banded together to bridge the partisan divides that can be so difficult to overcome.

Utah and Utahns are remarkable.

If you are seeking a place to start a business, ask those at Idle Isle Cafe. Utah is the place.

If you are seeking a place where community matters, ask those at Operation MyHometown. Utah is the place.

If you are seeking a place where opportunity is abundant, read the story of O.C. Tanner. Utah is the place.

I am very grateful for the privilege of representing the State of Utah here in the U.S. Senate. It is my hope that the successes and the enduring spirit of

Utah will continue to serve as an example for the Nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). The Senator from Texas.

JUNETEENTH

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, yesterday, the Senate moved a historic bill one step closer to President Biden's desk. The Senate unanimously passed legislation to finally make Juneteenth a Federal holiday and to preserve the legacy of that momentous day for generations to come.

For more than a century, Texans have celebrated Juneteenth and commemorated the anniversary of the day slaves in Texas were first informed of the news that they were, indeed, free. President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, but the news didn't reach Texas for 2½ years, until June 19, 1865.

We were the first State to make Juneteenth a holiday and, of course, it commemorates an event that occurred in Galveston, TX. But over the last four decades, many other States have joined us.

It is finally time to recognize Juneteenth as a national holiday. I reintroduced this bipartisan bill with the Senator from Massachusetts, Senator MARKEY, this year, and I have been proud to work alongside my fellow Texan Congresswoman, SHEILA JACKSON LEE, in the House to get the bill passed and signed into law. The bill now heads to the House and according to Congressman STENY HOYER, the House will actually pass it today.

I will have more to say about the history and significance of Juneteenth tomorrow, but for now, I want to thank the dozens of Senators on both sides of the aisle who have supported this effort. I think, particularly now at this point in our Nation's history, a little reconciliation can go a long way.

It is also an opportunity to learn from our past. America is the greatest Nation in the world, but we are not perfect and, indeed, the original sin of slavery when this country was created has caused this country a lot of angst, death, and injustice over the years. We fought a civil war, and 600,000 Americans died. If you extrapolated that to current population, that would be like 3 million Americans dying.

Of course, we went through the civil rights movement in the sixties, and, of course, the latest manifestation of racial strife is the unfortunate killing of people like George Floyd and the lack of trust that exists between some law enforcement and the communities that they serve.

While America is not perfect, we continue to do the work to strive to be ''a more perfect Union,'' in the words of the Constitution.

IRAN

Mr. President, this Friday, Iran will hold its 13th Presidential election, but unlike Presidential elections in the United States or in any other legitimate democracy, this process in Iran is more about providing the appearance of a democracy than an actual democratic process.

In America, elections are conduits for change. If the American people don't like their elected officials or the direction of their government, they can change it. In Iran, elections are a sham. The candidates are hand selected, the result predetermined, and the opportunity for change nonexistent.

The process for electing the President of Iran is just a few steps shy of the fabricated elections in places like Iraq under Saddam Hussein. In 2002, Saddam won reelection by 11 million votes—11 million to 0—and there was reported to be 100 percent turnout. In fact, there weren't any other candidates running. In fact, the question on the ballot asked if Saddam should remain in office, check yes or no.

It reminds me of the story I heard about that time of a reporter traveling with a driver whom he had hired to drive him around Iraq to report on conditions there. The reporter asked—when he learned that there was 100-percent turnout and Saddam Hussein won by 100 percent of the votes, he said to this driver: Well, you have been with me; how did you vote? And he said: Saddam must have known what was in my heart.

That, to me, is maybe apocryphal, but a demonstration how even the dictators like Saddam Hussein, even the Ayatollah in Iran, still want to give the appearance of democracy, even though they deny it to their very own people.

In Iran, the situation isn't much different than the election under Saddam Hussein. It is just a larger effort to create the appearance of choices.

While the Iranian people may vote for the eventual winner, there is a highly controlled process that selects the pool of candidates, and the puppeteer behind the curtain is the Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei.

Unlike a true democracy, the candidates for President of Iran are not selected by the Iranian people. They are selected behind closed doors by a powerful group called the Guardian Council. This group, itself, is comprised of 12 people. Half are selected by the Supreme Leader and the other half are selected by the Parliament.

But Parliament can't select just anyone for this position. These six jurists are chosen from the options presented to the Parliament by the Chief Justice, and the Chief Justice—you might have guessed—is appointed by the Supreme Leader.

This contrived election is not the result of a fair and democratic process. So the candidates hardly represent the will of the Iranian people. Of the 592 registered candidates, only 7 were approved by the Guardian Council—5 conservatives and 2 so-called reformists.

The Guardian Council, in fact, prevented most reformists or moderate candidates from even participating in the race, and the candidate pool was carefully whittled down to a point that the outcome is virtually a known certainty.

All signs point to the eventual winner being Ebrahim Raisi, the favorite of the Supreme Leader and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. It is easy to see why Mr. Raisi is the chosen front man for the corrupt leaders of a brutal regime, because his resume is nothing less than a long list of atrocities. Mr. Raisi's first step to power came after the 1979 Revolution.

Throughout the 1980s, he gained more power and influence and the trust of the Ayatollah. In 1988, he was chosen to be one of the four members of the so-called ''death commission'' charged with carrying out executions of Iranians' political prisoners. Mr. Raisi played a central role in these executions, which took place over the course of 5 months.

It is difficult for us to be sure how many political prisoners were killed, but it is widely known to be in the thousands. Some believe the death toll could be as high as 30,000 from these death commissions.

Mr. Raisi's reign of terror did not stop there. He continued to serve in high-ranking positions throughout the government and inflict violence on dissidents. He currently serves as the Judiciary Chief, where he continues to direct the execution of protesters and ethnic minority groups. Once again, this mass murderer is expected to be the next President of Iran.

This election comes at a very precarious time for the regime. Iran has experienced major uprisings since the last election in 2017. Popular slogans included: ''Death to the dictator'' and ''Our enemy is right here; they lie when they say it is America.''

Iranian citizens place the responsibility for the economic crisis that the country is currently experiencing on the regime that controls the country. The vast majority of Iranians live below the poverty line, and the government's pathetic mishandling of COVID–19 has made already harsh circumstances even more unbearable.

The Iranian people know this election is a sham. Candidates approved by the Supreme Leader offer no window for the freedoms and change that they desperately want and desperately need.

The Iranian resistance has called for an all-out boycott of the elections, and turnout is expected to be the lowest since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

For the United States and our allies, this changing of the guard cannot be just a blip on the radar, because Iran continues to commit human rights abuses and back terrorist organizations and authoritarian figures, including dictators around the world.

Currently, two Iranian warships are making their way across the Atlantic, and we have reason to believe that these ships are carrying missile-equipped fast-attack boats and other military equipment to Venezuela.