

very accurate, about some despot or some leader of a country who has done criminal acts, has stolen the property of that country or any one of a number of things—it could be very accurate and, in our country, truth is a defense—what they will do is maybe order online a couple copies of the books and deliver them to another country with weak libel laws and then seek judgments against the author, against the publisher, against newspapers that may have published excerpts of it; everything to chill any criticism of those who have either breached human rights or stolen from their own country and on and on.

On a broad scale, libel tourism results in a race to the bottom. It causes America to defer to a country with the most chilling and restrictive free speech standard determining what they can write or publish. This undermines our first amendment. The first amendment, as I said earlier, guarantees the diversity of thought and opinion in this country which actually allows and determines and guarantees that democracy.

The freedoms of speech and the press are cornerstones of our democracy. They enable vigorous debate, and an exchange of ideas that shapes our political process. Reporters, authors and publishers are among the primary sources of these ideas, and their ability to disseminate them through their writings is critical to our democracy. The broad dissemination of materials through the Internet, as well as the increased number of worldwide newspapers and periodicals, has compounded the threat of libel tourism.

This problem is well documented. Two years ago, the United Nations' Human Rights Committee observed that one country's libel laws "discourage[d] critical media reporting on matters of serious public interest, adversely affect[ed] the ability of scholars and journalists to publish their work," and "affect[ed] freedom of expression worldwide on matters of valid public interest."

Several States, to their credit, have enacted legislation to combat this problem, but we need a national response. While we can't legislate changes to foreign laws that are chilling protected speech in our country, what we can do to uphold the right of free speech in our own country is assure that our courts do not become a tool to uphold foreign libel judgments that undermine American first amendment or due process rights. The SPEECH Act is an important step toward reducing this chilling of American free speech.

The SPEECH Act is an important step toward reducing this chilling of American free speech. Americans have a great gift in their right of free speech. Every single Senator, Republican and Democratic, should join, as we have in this case, to protect America's rights.

The SPEECH Act is the product of hard work and extensive negotiations

on both sides of the aisle, and the process is certainly mindful about principles of international comity. Many supporters would not have written this bill in this exact way, but all recognize that a bipartisan compromise is an important step in confronting the libel tourism issue. Without it, we could not pass this bill.

Among the supporters are the Vermont Library Association, former Attorney General Michael Mukasey, the former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, James Woolsey, the American Library Association, the Association of American Publishers, the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, the American Civil Liberties Union, Net Coalition, and renowned first amendment lawyer, Floyd Abrams.

I would also like to recognize Dr. Rachel Ehrenfeld, Director of the American Center for Democracy, who herself has been the victim of a libel suit in the United Kingdom, and has been a tremendous advocate for Congressional action in this area.

I wish to thank Senators SPECTER, SCHUMER, and LIEBERMAN for their work in raising this important issue in the Senate and Representative COHEN for his hard work on libel tourism legislation in the other body. I am pleased the Senate has adopted this bipartisan legislation. I look forward to its prompt consideration and adoption by the House and to the President signing it into law.

Mr. President, I do not see anybody else seeking recognition, so I will suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

SMALL BUSINESS LENDING FUND ACT OF 2010

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 5297, which the clerk will report by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5297) to create the Small Business Lending Fund Program to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to make capital investments in eligible institutions in order to increase the availability of credit for small businesses, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for small business job creation, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid (for Baucus/Landrieu) amendment No. 4402, in the nature of a substitute.

Reid amendment No. 4403 (to amendment No. 4402), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 4404 (to amendment No. 4403), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 4405 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 4402), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 4406 (to amendment No. 4405), of a perfecting nature.

Reid motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Finance with instructions, Reid amendment No. 4407 (to the instructions on the motion to commit), in the nature of a substitute.

Reid amendment No. 4408 (to the instructions (amendment No. 4407) of the motion to commit), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 4409 (to amendment No. 4408), of a perfecting nature.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAUFMAN.) Without objection, it is so ordered.

KAGAN NOMINATION

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I wish to speak on a very serious issue relating to the confirmation of Solicitor General Elena Kagan for the Supreme Court of the United States. As I was preparing for her hearings, I noted what struck me as a disturbing decision she had made as Solicitor General shortly after taking that position, in a case called *Witt v. Department of the Air Force*. In that case, a former member of an Air Force Reserve unit in Washington State sued the government to challenge the "don't ask, don't tell" law, which essentially says openly homosexual persons may not serve in the U.S. military. The case was dismissed by the district court, and the military was allowed to proceed with its policy. But when it was appealed to the Ninth Circuit, that very liberal court of appeals overturned the district court and said the case should go to trial and announced an unworkable legal test that the lower court must apply and that the government would have to meet for the "don't ask, don't tell" statute to survive constitutional challenge.

After that unprecedented ruling, the Solicitor General's Office, then manned by the Bush administration personnel, immediately authorized an appeal to the full Ninth Circuit, en banc, and the government asked the full court to take a look at it and overturn the three-judge panel. The full court of appeals declined to do so, over strong objections from several judges on the Ninth Circuit who thought their colleagues had clearly gotten the case wrong. In fact, the First Circuit in the Northeast had already reached a different conclusion in a very similar case, and had upheld the statute.

At that point, the government could have appealed the Ninth Circuit decision to the Supreme Court, as I think the Solicitor General's Office clearly was on track to do. First, they sought en banc review, and then they would seek interlocutory appeal to the Supreme Court. But as it happened, by