

agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:31 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the President pro tempore (Ms. BALDWIN).

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2014—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. CHIESA. Madam President, it is an honor for me to speak here today for the first time on the floor of this distinguished body.

I am mindful of the fact that had it not been for the passing of my predecessor, Senator Frank Lautenberg, I would not be here today. So I want to associate myself with the tributes that have already been paid to his memory.

It has occurred to me that if I waited any longer before speaking on the Senate floor for the first time, my maiden speech and my farewell address would be one and the same.

My service representing the people of New Jersey in this great institution will be brief. Yet, for me, I know it will be one of the highlights of my life.

I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to my family—my wife Jenny and my children, Al and Hannah—for enthusiastically supporting the decision we made as a family to allow me to be here. As everyone in public life knows, the support of our families is indispensable to our service. My daughter Hannah is here with me in Washington this week supporting her dad.

I am also incredibly grateful to Governor Christie for the confidence he has again shown in me by naming me to this position. I am deeply humbled by the opportunity to serve the people of my State—the State where I was born and raised and am raising my own family—here in the Senate.

Some refer to Senators who have been appointed to unexpired vacancies as “caretakers.” I reject that label for myself, as I imagine others have who have found themselves in similar positions. No one who has the high honor and privilege of serving in this body should ever be content to serve as a caretaker—to merely “keep the seat warm.” Representing the people even for a brief period of time demands that one work to make a difference. My Senate colleagues show me that every day with their commitment.

Today I wish to use this great honor to help give voice to a shockingly large and largely unseen group of people who have no voice of their own. The United Nations estimates there are upwards of 27 million of them around the globe.

There are believed to be at least 100,000 of them here in the United States. They are among the most exploited, abused, and neglected people on the face of the Earth. They are the victims of human trafficking. They are, to be more direct, modern-day slaves.

Over the course of my career, both as an assistant U.S. attorney and more recently as the attorney general of New Jersey, I have come face to face with the terrible misery of human trafficking. The faces of its victims are haunting. They are often young, and more often than not they are female. They come from every corner of the world but especially from those places where poverty and want define day-to-day existence. They are exploited and abused by human predators that have no respect for the law and no respect for basic decency. Often lured by their captors with empty promises of a better life, the victims are instead utterly betrayed. These victims are robbed of their youth, their freedom, their dignity, their health, and sometimes even their lives. They must not be forgotten. They must not be robbed of justice.

Human traffickers—the purveyors of the modern-day slave trade—do enormous harm to their victims. When these victims are used in the promotion of such crimes as prostitution and child pornography, they are also debasing our neighborhoods and our families. As they exploit their victims by forcing them to labor for little or no money in a wide variety of workplaces and appalling circumstances, they are also exploiting employers who offer good jobs, at fair wages, in safe working conditions. And as they abuse their victims in ways too horrible to contemplate, they are also abusing our commitment as a society to honor the dignity of every human being.

My first exposure to the fight against human trafficking goes back to my tenure as an assistant U.S. attorney in New Jersey. And as New Jersey’s attorney general, I made this fight a priority, issuing a directive on human trafficking to sharpen New Jersey’s focus in the fight against this terrible crime by channeling more resources and greater attention to the problem.

This effort is already producing results. Just over a week ago the New Jersey Attorney General’s Office arrested six people in Lakewood, New Jersey, and charged them with various human trafficking and other offenses. Accused of running a sophisticated network that brought dozens of women into the United States from Mexico to work in illegal brothels, those arrested in Lakewood will also face new, tougher penalties if convicted. And their victims have been saved from the degradation to which their captors were subjecting them. As satisfying as it is to see justice done to the traffickers, there is an even greater sense of accomplishment in restoring freedom to those who were brutally held in bondage.

There are, of course, efforts under way to find and prosecute traffickers both at home and abroad, as well as to identify and aid the innocent victims of human trafficking. The Department of State’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons leads our Nation’s efforts to combat human trafficking around the world. The Department of Homeland Security’s Blue Campaign works with law enforcement, State and local governments, various nongovernmental organizations, and other private groups to provide information, training, and outreach. Countless law enforcement officers and prosecutors at every level of government are united in the fight to end human trafficking. And untold numbers of organizations and caring people have committed themselves to aiding the survivors of this terrible assault on human dignity.

In this body, the Senate Caucus to End Human Trafficking, led by my distinguished colleagues, the senior Senator from Connecticut, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and the junior Senator from Ohio, Mr. PORTMAN, helps to “combat human trafficking by promoting awareness, removing demand, supporting prosecution efforts, and providing appropriate service systems for survivors.” I fully support their outstanding efforts and look forward to working with them on this important issue.

And there is more we can do. Having served recently as attorney general, I know the States—and specifically the State attorneys general—feel hampered in their efforts to put an end to the insidious practice of using the Internet to sell illegal sexual services, especially when exploiting the victims of human trafficking.

I urge my colleagues to carefully consider any proposals that may come forward to close loopholes in the Federal law that are furthering the victimization of young women being held in bondage.

There are, unfortunately, no easy answers. Human trafficking can be hard to detect and even harder to prove. It is not unusual for victims to be unaware that they are victims of a crime. Their captors are often successful at persuading their victims that what is happening to them is their own fault. And because of the incessant and violent intimidation to which victims are subjected, they may be afraid to even attempt to escape the situation in which they find themselves. Fearing retaliation from their captors or perhaps afraid they may be deported or returned to the situation they sought to escape from in the first place, they are reluctant to seek help, or even to offer help in punishing their captors once they are freed.

The challenge faced in fighting human trafficking is compounded because not enough people—even people in law enforcement and the justice system—recognize it when they confront it. That is why efforts to promote