

night that “any House-Senate agreement on a trafficking bill that includes a victims fund will” have to contain “the Hyde Amendment, as we have done for nearly 40 years.” So the House of Representatives says that any bill that passes the House will also include this language.

What about that great bastion of conservatism—the Washington Post? The Washington Post recently noted in an editorial that “the Hyde Act has been in force for four decades,” and pointedly asked whether the inclusion of this bipartisan provision “justifies the defeat of this important legislation.” Given the long legislative history of this bipartisan provision and the overwhelmingly popular support for what it does, the answer, obviously, is no. No, most of our colleagues on the other side voted for this very same provision 3 months ago.

Let’s remember what this debate should really be about. It should not be about what leftwing lobbyists want. It should be about helping the victims of modern slavery—victims such as Melissa, whom my colleague Senator CORNYN has spoken about before. She was sold into the sex trade when she was just 12 years old. She was beaten regularly and chained to a bed in a warehouse. She was even set on fire by those who enslaved her. That is Melissa’s story. She said she just wanted to die.

When Melissa finally escaped the grasp of her tormenters, she was not treated like a victim. Melissa was treated like a criminal by our justice system. It is stories such as Melissa’s that should motivate every Member of this Chamber to act.

The victims who suffer in dark warehouses may not have the same clout as the lobbyists who appear to oppose this bill, but these victims need our help, and they need it now. So if there truly are Senators who are concerned with removing a bipartisan provision they have supported so many times in the past, they should offer an amendment to strike it and then stop blocking this human rights bill. I offered them a chance to do just that last week.

Let’s have a vote—a simple majority vote—on a measure they now belatedly find they object to, having supported it in the past, and then, as an official with the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women put it: “Win or lose and move on.” But as it stands now, in her words, “Senate Democrats are choosing a phantom problem over real victims.” That is the spokesman for the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women.

The White House needs to get involved here too. So far the White House has barely lifted a finger to help us pass this legislation, and that needs to change. I think the White House should do this because it is the right thing to do. But if that is not enough, they should also consider the consequences of Democrats making a historic mistake.

If Democrats actually vote to filibuster help for oppressed victims of modern slavery, I cannot imagine that the American people will forget it.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO RUBY PAONE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the longest serving Member of this body is the President pro tempore emeritus of the Senate, PATRICK LEAHY of Vermont. He came to this body in January of 1975, 40 years and 2 months ago. But nipping at his heels is an individual well-known in this Chamber, Ruby Paone. Ruby came to the Senate right out of college and has worked in the Reception Room and other places in the Senate for decades—four decades, in fact.

Today marks Ruby’s 40th anniversary of working in the Senate. To put that in perspective, she has worked through 7 different Presidential administrations, 16 different Sergeants at Arms, and has seen 383 Senators serve in this Chamber during her time.

After working with 383 different Senators, one would think that maybe she could not remember these names and faces, but that is not Ruby. She knows everyone and remembers everything during her time here in the Senate.

During these 40 years in the Senate, a lot has happened, not the least of which is meeting her husband, whom we all know, Marty. Marty also worked in the Senate for many, many years, eventually serving as the secretary of the majority, and we all depended on him so much.

In fact, Ruby and Marty were both here in the Capitol working on their wedding day. The Senate was in session until 12 p.m. that day. Marty and Ruby decided to get married 3 hours later, and they did.

Ruby and Marty have three wonderful children. I can remember their careers in soccer and working their way through school. Their children are Alexander, Stephanie, and Tommy. Ruby and Marty are rightly very proud of these three fine young people, one girl, Stephanie, and the two boys.

No words can adequately sum up the 40 years of service to our country, but Adlai Stevenson came close when he said: “Patriotism is not a short and frenzied outburst of emotion but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime.”

I appreciate very much Ruby’s steadfast dedication. I admire her continued support of this institution that is very dear to so many of us. Thank you, Ruby, for your 40 years of faithful service, and we look forward to many more.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an article that ap-

peared and was posted last night at 7:14 p.m. in the Washington Post be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 16, 2015]
AFFORDABLE CARE ACT ADDS 16.4 MILLION TO HEALTH INSURANCE ROLLS
(By Lenny Bernstein)

About 16.4 million adults have been added to health insurance rolls under the Affordable Care Act, which provided especially robust gains in coverage for minorities and states that expanded their Medicaid programs, administration officials announced Monday.

The total includes 14.1 million adults who joined the insurance rolls since October 2013 and 2.3 million younger adults ages 19 to 25 who were able to remain on their parents’ health insurance plans since October 2010, when that provision of Obamacare went into effect.

Richard Frank, the assistant secretary for planning and evaluation at the Department of Health and Human Services, called the gains “historic,” comparing the impact to the creation of Medicare and Medicaid in the mid-1960s.

HHS Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell said she was “pleased” with the numbers but added that the government still can enroll greater numbers of African Americans and Latinos.

“African American, Latino [rates] are not exactly where you want to be, because the [uninsured] numbers are still high,” Burwell said. “I believe we can do more.”

The Latino uninsured rate dropped by 12.3 percentage points between the first quarter of 2014 and the same period in 2015 as 4.2 million adults gained coverage. That ethnic group, however, continues to have the lowest rate of insurance coverage.

About 2.3 million African Americans enrolled, dropping that group’s uninsured rate by 9.2 percentage points, and 6.6 million whites obtained coverage, a decline of 5.3 percentage points.

The data are based on surveys conducted for HHS. The totals do not show whether an individual obtained coverage through the new insurance marketplaces, a private employer or some other method. No numbers on children were included.

States that decided to expand their Medicaid insurance programs for the poor recorded bigger gains than those that didn’t, reducing their uninsured rate by 7.4 percentage points as compared with 6.9 points for states that declined to expand.

Meena Seshamani, director of HHS’s Office of Health Reform, said the 16.4 million newly covered adults no longer need to put off health care “because they can’t afford it” or “worry about going broke” if they face a serious illness.

“Today’s news is good for the health and financial security of millions of Americans,” she said.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, referring to this article just printed in the RECORD: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released some very good news, further proof that ObamaCare is working and insuring millions of Americans—16.4 million to be exact.

Reading from the Washington Post report that is now part of this RECORD, I state:

About 16.4 million adults have been added to health insurance rolls under the Affordable Care Act, which provided especially robust gains in coverage for minorities—

And everyone, in fact— and states that expanded their Medicaid programs, administration officials announced Monday.

The total includes 14.1 million adults who joined the insurance rolls since October 2013 and 2.3 million younger adults ages 19 to 25 who were able to remain on their parents' health insurance plans since October 2010, when that provision of Obamacare went into effect.

As if that weren't enough good news, the Department of Health and Human Services also reported that uninsured rates for minorities are plunging.

Quote:

The Latino uninsured rate dropped by 12.3 percentage points between the first quarter of 2014 and the same period in 2015 as 4.2 million adults gained coverage. . . .

About 2.3 million African Americans enrolled, dropping that group's uninsured rate by 9.2 percentage points, and 6.6 million whites obtained coverage, a decline of 5.3 percentage points.

So it is clear that the Affordable Care Act is working just as Congress intended.

Not only are record numbers of Americans gaining health coverage, but historically underinsured communities are now getting access to quality health care.

At some point, my Republican colleagues need to face reality. ObamaCare is helping their constituents.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION AND LORETTA LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I wish to speak a little bit about human trafficking and Loretta Lynch.

The Republican leader is right. In an hour or so the Senate will vote to end debate on the human trafficking and child pornography legislation. That vote is going to fail. The Republican leader knows it is going to fail, just as I do. It is going to fail because Republicans have chosen to manufacture a political fight that has nothing to do with human trafficking.

Abortion legislation has no place in human trafficking legislation. The Republican Congressman who drafted this version of the human trafficking bill in the House said as much. Congressman ERIK PAULSEN said: "There is no reason it should be included in these bills. This issue is far too important to tie it up with an unrelated fight with politics as usual."

We have a long piece out of the New York Times. My friend quoted partially from the Washington Post. But let's be realistic. There has been a sleight of hand here to get the abortion language in this bill.

As this article indicates:

This legislation, which sailed through committee in February, stalled last week when Democrats noticed a provision that would prohibit money in the fund from being used to pay for abortions. The original Senate bill, introduced in the last Congress, made no reference to abortion. Nor did the House's version of the bill, introduced by Representa-

tive Erik Paulsen. Paulsen said, "there is no reason it should be." He said last week, "This issue is far too important to tie it up with an unrelated fight with politics as usual."

Republicans say they routinely add the abortion language to bills, but Democrats say Republicans operated in bad faith—not to mention in violation of Senate norms—by misrepresenting the bill's contents.

This dispute has nothing to do with the needs of the Justice Department. It is beyond irresponsible to strand the Department without a leader, sowing instability and uncertainty in an important executive agency.

The chief law enforcement officer of our country is being detained because of this fight between us, Democrats and Republicans, over whether abortion should be in this bill. We believe it shouldn't be; Republicans believe it should be.

This is a good person who deserves our immediate attention. The Loretta Lynch nomination should be done immediately. There is no reason we can't do this now, today.

Would the Presiding Officer tell us the business of the day?

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 178, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 178) to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Pending:

Portman amendment No. 270, to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to enable State child protective services systems to improve the identification and assessment of child victims of sex trafficking.

Portman amendment No. 271, to amend the definition of "homeless person" under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to include certain homeless children and youth.

Vitter amendment No. 284 (to amendment No. 271), to amend section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify those classes of individuals born in the United States who are nationals and citizens of the United States at birth.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11 a.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum, and I ask unanimous consent that the time be charged equally.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, at 11 a.m. this morning we will be having a very important vote on human trafficking in an important piece of legislation, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. I am glad this issue is finally getting the kind of attention it deserves, but I would be lying to you if I said I wasn't disappointed in the way this bill has become a political football for people who want to cause the Senate to cease to function entirely or to relitigate issues that have been resolved 40 years ago such as the Hyde amendment.

We in the Senate have an opportunity to do a great deal of good for thousands of people, including children who are victims of sex trafficking, many of whom are young girls not even of high school age. On average the typical victim of human trafficking is between the age of 12 and 14.

But instead of voting to pass this bill last week, as I had originally hoped, the minority leader, the Democratic leader, blocked the vote, and he has consistently taken the position that they are not going to allow us to progress with this legislation. The majority leader offered to give the other side a vote to strip out the language which they find offensive, but that was declined; and instead, the obstruction and the blocking of this legislation continues.

I would like to come back to the question that I have asked myself privately and I have asked here publicly repeatedly, and that is, Why are so many of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle objecting to language they have repeatedly voted for time and time and time again? Why do they want to make this an issue on this piece of legislation, which is one of the rare islands of bipartisan comity, cooperation, and collaboration we have seen in recent times? Most importantly, why are Democrats going to the wall to block a bill that would help thousands of innocent victims of sex trafficking across the country who are crying out for our help? It truly baffles me, but that is what is going on.

Of course, we know human trafficking is a problem all across the country, including my home in Texas. I was recently reminded of a couple of Texas stories about how important it is that we pass this legislation, including a recent story out of Waco, TX, involving the Border Patrol, where it was reported that over the last 5 months the Border Patrol has apprehended 144 known sex offenders trying to sneak back into the United States illegally. So reportedly 100,000 people are trafficked each year, according to the Washington Post. They say an estimated 100,000 children are trafficked each year for sex. Why in the world can't we find some way to set these differences aside, to fight them another day, and to move on doing some good where we can by passing this legislation?