

people guilty of that crime, and she is being delayed in her appointment as Attorney General of the United States of America because of a political debate on the floor of the Senate for almost 4 weeks over this bill.

Under Ms. Lynch's leadership, the U.S. Attorney's office in the Eastern District of New York has brought many important prosecutions in human trafficking. In *United States v. Lopez*, three brothers were convicted in 2014 for running a human trafficking ring involving 14- and 15-year-old girls. Ms. Lynch was also involved in the successful prosecution of the Granados-Hernandez sex trafficking ring, in which numerous child trafficking victims were reunited with their mothers. In *United States v. Johnson*, Ms. Loretta Lynch was involved in a prosecution where a Queens man was convicted for trafficking and prostituting a 15-year-old girl out of his home.

Make no mistake, when it comes to the issue of human trafficking, this nominee for Attorney General knows more about the subject than most, and she has a record to prove it. Malika Saada Saar, the executive director of Rights4Girls, is one of the Nation's leading antitrafficking advocates. She said: "It is clear that as the top prosecutor in Brooklyn, New York, Lynch has a strong record of being tough on crime and human trafficking." She has been held up on the floor because of our failure to pass a bill on that same subject.

Here is what the President of the National District Attorneys Association, Michael Moore, said about Ms. Loretta Lynch when he wrote to express his organization's strong support for her: "As prosecutors facing challenges in the field from violent crime, to human trafficking, to gangs and drug traffickers, our membership feels that Ms. Lynch understands the operational nature of these challenges and will be a strong independent voice at the helm of the Department."

Calling a vote on Ms. Lynch and confirming her would be a big step forward in the fight against trafficking. It is time to end this delay and obstruction. This extraordinary woman nominated by the President of the United States to be the first African-American woman to serve as Attorney General should have been approved by the Senate long ago. While she has been waiting patiently for a long, long time, we have interrupted the business of the Senate to approve the President's appointments for Assistant Secretary of Transportation, Assistant Secretary of Commerce, Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commissioners, Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board Members, Undersecretary for Management at the Department of Homeland Security, Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission, and several Federal judges.

We have had more than adequate opportunity to call Ms. Lynch for approval. Let us not leave Washington

this week without voting on Loretta Lynch to be our next Attorney General. I voted for her in committee and will proudly support her nomination in the hopes that it will come to the floor this week.

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

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

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 legislative clerk read as follows:

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

Pending:

McConnell (for Cornyn) amendment No. 1120, to strengthen the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act by incorporating additional bipartisan amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I realize the devil is always in the details. I see the distinguished senior Senator from Texas on the floor and I hope we are getting somewhere on trafficking.

I appreciate the fact that this body, when we were doing the Violence Against Women Act, voted for the anti-sex trafficking amendment I proposed. And the majority of the Senators at the time voted for the final version of the Violence Against Women Act, which included anti-sex trafficking language, and that bill has been signed into law. We should continue on with this bill, which adds to what we did a couple of years ago. But I am concerned, as I have said many times, that we have held up Loretta Lynch because of this. I cannot see what the corollary is.

My friends on the other side of the aisle told me, when they had to wait for 3 or 4 days for a Republican nominee on the floor to get confirmed, that it was too long. They would warn us of national security concerns. Well, Loretta Lynch has waited on the floor for a vote for 54 days. I want to put this in some context. Attorney General Holder waited 5 days. Attorney General Mukasey waited 2 days. Attorney General Gonzales waited 8 days. Attorney General Ashcroft waited 2 days. Attorney General Reno waited 1 day. Attorney General Barr waited 5 days. Attorney General Thornburgh waited 1 day. If we take those seven most recent Attorneys General and take all the time that they waited on the floor and add it all together, it comes to 24 days. Loretta

Lynch has waited 54 days on the floor—more than twice as long as the seven most recent Attorneys General combined.

Then we still have the Deputy Attorney General nominee, whose background is virtually the same as Loretta Lynch's. Both are highly respected prosecutors. Both have prosecuted matters involving the issues we are trying to stop here on the floor—terrorists, traffickers, and white-collar criminals. Once we are done with Loretta Lynch, we have to get her deputy confirmed. I hope both of these highly qualified women are confirmed soon. It has already taken too long.

These delays create a morale problem in the Department of Justice—one of our first lines against terrorists and organized crime. We have some superb men and women who work at the Department of Justice. Some came during Republican administrations, and some came during Democratic administrations. I have met many of these men and women, from both Republican and Democratic administrations, and I am so impressed by them and their dedication. Most of them could leave, go to a law firm, and make a lot more money, but they are dedicated to this country. It is demoralizing to them when we hold the position of Attorney General in limbo. We should stop. The Department of Justice is something we should, whenever possible, keep politics out of.

Remember, too, it is not the "Secretary of Justice," like we have the Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of Agriculture and so on—a member, as some might suggest, of the President's staff. This is the Attorney General of the United States. They represent you. They represent me. They represent everybody.

I have often told a story about when I was a young law student at Georgetown. The then-Attorney General invited four or five students from different law schools to meet. He reviewed our grades, invited us in to actually spend an hour with him and encouraged us to come work with the Department of Justice.

I remember one of the questions I asked that Attorney General. I said: If you are Attorney General of the United States and you are asked to prosecute somebody who is close to the President, what do you do?

He said: Well, if they should be prosecuted, they would be treated the same as anybody else, and we would prosecute them as such.

I declined the offer to go work at the Department of Justice. I was homesick and wanted to get back to Vermont. Both my wife and I wanted to get back. I wanted to practice law there, which I did, and I actually became a prosecutor. But I often thought of what the Attorney General said to me about his role. Subsequently a man in Illinois who was critical to the election of the next President ran afoul of the law and the same Attorney General signed off

on his prosecution. When asked by some of his staff, "Well, are you sure you are OK with this?" he said, "He committed a crime. He should be prosecuted. Even though I probably won't go to many family reunions for some time after doing this." This was, of course, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, and the man he prosecuted was critical to the election of his brother John Kennedy as President. I always admired that he was willing to do that—that he put his duties as a prosecutor first ahead of any political duties. I believe Loretta Lynch will do the same.

Sometimes young law students can be very impressionable, but I have never forgotten that time sitting there with Attorney General Kennedy. I have never forgotten how I had to wrestle with the decision to turn down his offer, but it was a family decision and one I have never regretted. I went back to Vermont, and things turned out all right. I have had the privilege of representing Vermont for over 40 years in this body. But that conversation is something I will always remember. It is one of the reasons I went on to the Judiciary Committee. It is one of the reasons I took, when it was offered to me, the chairmanship of the Committee and it is one of the reasons why I am now ranking member.

Incidentally, the men and women who work there, on both sides of the aisle, are brilliant lawyers, hard-working people. Kristine Lucius is my chief counsel, and I don't know a better lawyer anywhere than she is or anybody who works harder than she does.

We have a lot of issues before the Judiciary Committee. Senator GRASSLEY is my friend. We have been friends for over 30 years. I won't speak for him, but I suspect he would say we have things to get going to. So I hope we are able to get this trafficking matter taken care of and get the Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General confirmed.

In the last 2 years of President Bush's second term, Democrats had come back into the majority. I wanted to show that we would try to keep partisanship out, and as chairman, I had moved 15 of President Bush's judges through to confirmation by this time in his second term. We moved them far more rapidly than Republicans had toward the end of President Clinton's term.

I am glad we have been able to confirm two judges this Congress. They were both judges from Texas whom I supported. I complimented the two Senators from Texas because of their work in picking candidates who would be judges first and foremost without reference to whatever political background they may have. I hope we can now start doing what we did with President Bush and confirm more.

Let's stop making judges political. I am afraid that there could be good men and women who will decline the cut in pay and everything else to become a

Federal judge if they think they are going to have to put their life on hold for 6 months or a year to get there—even more so for key positions such as Attorney General, Deputy Attorney General, and others in the Department of Justice. We can fight over political issues but this should be outside of that.

The distinguished senior Senator from Texas was a judge and has a prosecutorial background. He and I have worked closely together on a number of issues—the Freedom of Information Act being one of them. And I suspect we will work together on a number of issues to come. Let's get past this roadblock and onto other things.

I see him on the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I came to the floor to talk about the work in the Senate and particularly the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. But I would say to my colleague and friend, with whom I have worked on so many important issues, that I also look forward—once we get past today's business—to working together with him on patent reform, criminal justice reform, and also to continue our very productive partnership on open government and transparency, particularly the Freedom of Information Act legislation.

SAN JACINTO DAY

Mr. President, before I talk about the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, I have to note this: It is my responsibility, my duty, my honor to note that today is a very important day in Texas. This is San Jacinto Day. For those who do not know what that is, this is the official State holiday that honors Texas independence, where 910 soldiers, led by General Sam Houston, won the decisive battle of the Texas Revolution.

So it is not the Battle of the Alamo that gave Texas its independence. That is the one that people perhaps remember the most. Maybe it is because of the movies and books that have been written about that. Actually, the Battle of the Alamo did not turn out too well. Virtually, everybody was killed. But it gave rise to the opportunity for these 910 men, led by General Sam Houston, on San Jacinto Day, to win the decisive battle of the Texas Revolution. Now, almost 180 years later, I think it is only appropriate and fitting that we recognize their bravery and their sacrifices in pursuit of our dream of freedom.

Mr. President, on the subject of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, this has been a strange experience, starting as we did on something that passed unanimously in the Judiciary Committee, with 30 cosponsors on a bipartisan basis, and all of a sudden to have this legislation stuck here in the Senate. I will not relitigate the reasons for that because, frankly, I think we have now found a way forward for this

legislation, as the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, and the Democratic leader, Senator REID, announced this morning.

It is going to take a little bit more work by the Senate. There are perhaps a handful of amendments that we will have an opportunity to vote on. I know there is a desire by everyone for us to finish this trafficking bill as soon as we can, and then we can address the concerns that the ranking member from Vermont, Senator LEAHY, has about the Attorney General nomination.

Senator MCCONNELL has made very clear that once we get trafficking resolved, which it appears we are on a path to doing, then we can turn to the Lynch nomination. I have actually been somewhat surprised and more optimistic than I have been in a long time about how the Senate is beginning to work again, from passing a budget to dealing with the broken doc fix that had been the law of the land since 1997, which had required us to come back and patch—every 6 months to a year—and the reforms that actually were negotiated by Speaker BOEHNER and Leader PELOSI in the House, which we passed by an overwhelming margin here in the Senate.

Then, consider what happened in the Foreign Relations Committee on the Iran sanctions issue with a unanimous vote and the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, with Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY announcing an agreement to move forward on the reauthorization of early childhood education.

We have some very good progress that is being made on trade, for example. I just came from the Senate Finance Committee. I think there is a path forward on trade promotion authority and consideration of the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

The truth is that the United States has roughly 20 percent of the world's purchasing power, which means 80 percent of the purchasing power in the world lies beyond our borders. We have 5 percent of the world's population, meaning 95 percent of the world's population lies beyond our borders.

The opportunities we have to grow our economy and to help small and medium-sized businesses and the people—the middle-class families who work at those businesses—are very exciting. So the point is that after a long period of dysfunction in the Senate, we are starting to see the Senate work again the way it should work, the way it has historically worked—through the committees, to build consensus on legislation that can then come to the floor, and then to have Senators, whether they be in the majority or minority, to offer constructive suggestions about how to solve our Nation's biggest challenges, and then to work together to send these to the President and get his signature.

So there are a lot of positive things happening in the Senate. I hope for even more positive things to occur in the near future.

I have been focused like a laser for some time now on justice for the victims of human trafficking. When I think for a minute about the fact that the typical victim of human trafficking is a 12- to 13-year-old girl, who has been sold essentially into sex slavery and who has lost control over her life and perhaps, to her mind, to her future. I cannot think of a more compelling need for the Senate than to try to offer a lifeline to these victims of human trafficking. That is what this legislation that hopefully we will act on today—perhaps no later than tomorrow—is designed to do. It creates a fund that could be as high as \$30 million—not from taxes but from fines and penalties paid by people who commit sexual offenses and basically represents the demand side of the human trafficking equation.

We have found a way now, on a bipartisan basis, to move this legislation forward so we can offer a hand to rescue these victims of human trafficking, so we can give them an opportunity to heal and we can provide them some hope for a better future.

I know all of us, by virtue of the privilege of the office that we serve in, have had stories from constituents about human trafficking. I remember quite clearly Brooke Axtell of Austin, TX, who now works with a number of nonprofits, and has basically turned her tragic story into serving others who have likewise become victims of human trafficking. Brooke's story is really almost beyond belief. She says that at age 7 she was sexually abused. She was literally held captive in a basement and sold to men who would pay money to have sex with her, a 7-year old child.

Brooke has brought to light her pain and has begun to heal as a result of having been rescued and been given a helping hand. But she has now turned her tragic story into hope by honorably helping others find a way out of a life that she herself experienced. She founded a group called Survivor Healing and Empowerment, which is a healing community of survivors of rape, abuse, and sex trafficking.

There is another horrific story that I have heard—I am sure just as all the Members of the Senate have heard coming from their States, because this is not something isolated in one State. This is a national—indeed, it is an international—phenomenon. Another woman I have had the privilege of meeting with and who has shared her story with me is Melissa Woodward from the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Melissa was 12 years old when she was sold into the sex trade by a family member—unbelievable. Eventually, she was pulled out of school to be trafficked full time when she was in the sixth grade. Her life, as she describes it, became a prison. She was literally chained to a bed in a warehouse, she says, and endured regular beatings and obviously, sexual assaults.

There was even once an attempt to set her on fire by one of her abusers.

All the while, she says, she was forced to serve between 5 and 30 men every day. She said she wished she was dead.

As heartbreaking as Melissa's story is, just as sad is the way she was treated after she escaped her captors. In one of the big changes in the way we have approached victims of human trafficking—at one point we claimed they were the criminal because they had engaged in prostitution. But the idea of a child prostitute is an oxymoron. A child cannot consent to a life of prostitution.

What we find, in looking at the victims of human trafficking, is that many of them are manipulated, coerced, and forced to engage in this sex activity for the economic benefit of their johns or their pimps or their traffickers. This is all about money. This is about the face of evil that treats human beings as objects or as things, without the basic dignity and respect which all human beings are entitled to. But as I said, one of the problems with the way we used to treat victims of human trafficking is that we treated them like criminals. That was all too common an outcome for trafficking victims who were labeled as prostitutes and left with very few options but to ultimately return to a nightmare that, sadly, exists in our country.

That is beginning to change. It needs to change even more, which is another reason why we need to pass this bill. This is the kind of legislation that I think in many ways is unique, because it is a nonpartisan piece of legislation. All this legislation is designed to do is to help the victims of human trafficking get rescued and then begin to heal and to get on with their lives. It is designed to provide much-needed resources for victims of human trafficking—plain and simple. It may be nothing more than a safe place to sleep, protected from the people who would continue to abuse them.

It is designed to help people such as Brooke, Melissa, and so many others—the tens of thousands of victims of human trafficking. This legislation would not only provide help for those victims, but it would ensure that children such as Melissa are treated as victims and not criminals.

It would also add law enforcement tools to help authorities rescue victims and to take down human traffickers and the organized criminal networks who support them. That is an important point because human trafficking is not a mom-and-pop business. This is run by organized crime and criminal networks, some of them international or transnational.

I want to thank my colleagues for caring—for caring about people such as Melissa and Brooke and the many examples of human trafficking that we have all been introduced to.

I want to particularly express my gratitude for all of our colleagues for working on this and not giving up until we found a pathway toward success. This body's consideration of this bill

has proven that compromise and bipartisanship need not be relics of the past in today's Washington. They are very much alive and well, particularly when the need is so very great, as it is in this area. So now for the sake of these victims, let's get this important legislation passed and provide crucial help for the children trapped in modern day slavery.

I want to just conclude by saying a few thank-you's. I know it is a little premature. But we would not have gotten this far if it were not for the help of organizations such as Rights4Girls, Shared Hope International, Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, the End Child Prostitution and Trafficking organization, the National Association to Protect Children, and members of our staff in the Senate who have worked so hard to get us where we are today.

I want to express my gratitude to Senator KLOBUCHAR, Senator MURRAY, and Senator REID, on the other side of the aisle, who have worked so closely with us, and of course to the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator GRASSLEY, and particularly I want to single out the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL. He said we would not move to the nomination for Attorney General of the United States until we get this done. And, indeed, today, I hope and believe that we will get this done, and then we can turn to that nomination.

But there are others, perhaps too many to name: Senator WARNER, Senator HEITKAMP, and others on the Democratic side. There are those on the Republican side. Senator COLLINS comes to mind, and there are others who have worked so hard and so relentlessly and with such determination to get us where we are today. We need to get this over the finish line so we can move on to other business.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I was not going to be talking right now, but I understand some of the people who are going to be reserving time are not yet here.