

what she and her family did when she came to this country.

Let us reward those who are willing to come to America to work and make it better. Let us give these young people a chance. Let us, once and for all, say this Nation of immigrants is proud of our heritage and prouder still of what immigrants can mean to our future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I just wish to praise the senior Senator from Illinois. He has been consistent on this issue since he came here. He was one of the architects of a major overhaul of our immigration system a year and a half ago, which passed by a two-thirds majority, by Republicans and Democrats alike.

We have gone such a long way toward solving this problem. The Republican leadership in the House—even though the votes were there to pass it in the House—refused to bring it up.

I am proud to align myself as a follower of the leadership of the Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, on this issue.

With the way we apply the laws now, I wonder whether my grandparents would have been able to come to Vermont from Italy and see their grandson become a U.S. Senator or would have seen their highly decorated son serve in World War II. I wonder if my wife's parents would have been able to come from Canada so she could be born in Vermont.

Come on. We are a nation of immigrants. Let's welcome them. They can often make our country much stronger than it was before.

I applaud the Senator from Illinois.

USA FREEDOM ACT

Mr. LEAHY. On another issue, in just 12 days, section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act, along with two other surveillance authorities, will expire. And once again, the Senate Republican leadership is scrambling at the last minute to avoid a crisis of its own making.

Last year, we had a chance to pass the USA FREEDOM Act of 2014, and I urged the Senate to pass it. A majority of Senators, but not 60, voted for it because we all knew the expiration date for these surveillance authorities was right around the corner. We knew May 31 would arrive quickly in the new Congress.

I did not want our intelligence community to face a period of uncertainty leading up to the sunset, and I also didn't want the American people to have billions of their phone records stocked away in a government database any longer—especially as we have seen, in the case of Edward Snowden, just how insecure that database can be.

That is why we spent months holding six public hearings in the Judiciary Committee and even more months negotiating a bipartisan bill, which got

the support of the administration, the intelligence community, privacy groups, and the technology industry. I think that is the first time we have had all of them together.

Unfortunately, my attempts to avoid this last-minute chaos were blocked by the Republican leader last year. He said this was a matter that could wait for the new Congress. He said the new Republican majority would have a rigorous committee process for important issues.

Well, five months into the new Republican majority, and with the deadline looming, the Republican leader has just now turned his attention to this issue.

The Republican-led Senate committees have not taken steps toward reauthorization or reform. Instead, the majority leader now proposes a 60-day extension of a program that a Federal court of appeals just ruled is unlawful. The court ruled unanimously that it is unlawful, and they are saying, well, let's just extend the bulk collection program for another 60 days.

The majority leader apparently wants to do this to allow one of his committee chairmen to develop a last-minute "back-up plan." This is why we tried to pass legislation a year ago.

The House of Representatives is not going to pass a 60-day extension, nor should it. We should not extend this illegal program for one more day, and we do not need to do so. After all, we have a solution in hand. Why try to ignore reality and go on with something else?

We have a responsible solution. In fact, it is the only responsible solution. Broad consensus has developed around the bipartisan USA FREEDOM Act of 2015.

The Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence wrote a letter in support of the bill. The FBI Director told me he supports it. This past weekend, the former chairman and ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee advocated for passage of this legislation in an article in the Baltimore Sun.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that these materials be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Baltimore Sun, May 15, 2015]

INTELLIGENCE REFORM BILL IS IMPORTANT TO SAFEGUARDING OUR SECURITY AND PRIVACY

(By C.A. Dutch Ruppertsberger and Mike Rogers)

The USA Freedom Act will protect our security and privacy.

A recent Baltimore Sun editorial described legislation to reform the government's collection of Americans' phone and email data as a sign that "bipartisan cooperation in Congress is not completely dead" ("Reining in the surveillance state," May 5). We'd like to remind The Sun that similar legislation to end the mass storage of this data passed the House by an overwhelming bipartisan majority—it garnered more than 300 votes, in fact—over a year ago.

In our role as leaders on the House Intelligence Committee, we drafted and intro-

duced last year's bill together with our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee, Reps. Bob Goodlatte and John Conyers. Our success provided the foundation for the legislation that passed the House by an even larger margin on Wednesday. The USA Freedom Act ends the bulk collection of what we now know as "metadata"—that big database up at the National Security Agency that contains the phone numbers of millions of Americans will go away. The government will now have to seek court approval before petitioning private cell phone companies for records. The court will have to approve each application, except in emergencies, and major court decisions will be made public.

We need this reform to keep our country safe. Section 215 of the Patriot Act, which is the part that legalizes much of NSA's critical work to protect us from terrorists, expires in less than three weeks on June 1. If we do not reauthorize it with the reforms demanded by the public, essential capabilities to track legitimate terror suspects will expire, too.

That couldn't happen at a worse time—we live in a dangerous world. The threats posed by ISIS and other terror groups are just the tip of the iceberg. We also need strong defenses against increasingly aggressive cyber terrorists and the "lone wolf" terrorists who are often American citizens, for example.

This bill restores Americans' confidence that the government is not snooping on its own citizens by improving the necessary checks and balances essential to our Democracy. We helped write it last year, we support it this year and we hope Republicans and Democrats continue working together on common sense reforms to protect our national security and our civil liberties.

MAY 11, 2015.

Senator PATRICK J. LEAHY,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Senator MIKE S. LEE,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS LEAHY AND LEE: Thank you for your letter of May 11, 2015, asking for the views of the Department of Justice and the Intelligence Community on S. 1123, the USA FREEDOM Act of 2015. We support this legislation.

This bill is the result of extensive discussion among the Congress, the Administration, privacy and civil liberties advocates, and industry representatives. We believe that it is a reasonable compromise that preserves vital national security authorities, enhances privacy and civil liberties and codifies requirements for increased transparency. The Intelligence Community believes that the bill preserves the essential operational capabilities of the telephone metadata program and enhances other intelligence capabilities needed to protect our nation and its partners. In the absence of legislation, important intelligence authorities will expire on June 1. This legislation would extend these authorities, as amended, until the end of 2019, providing our intelligence professionals the certainty they need to continue the critical work they undertake every day to protect the American people.

The USA FREEDOM Act bans bulk collection under Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act, FISA pen registers, and National Security Letters, while providing a new mechanism to obtain telephone metadata records to help identify potential contacts of suspected terrorists inside the United States. The Intelligence Community believes, based on the existing practices of communications providers in retaining metadata, that these provisions will retain the essential operational capabilities of the existing bulk telephone metadata program while eliminating bulk collection by the government.

The bill also codifies requirements for additional transparency by mandating certain public reporting by the government, authorizing additional reporting by providers, and establishing a statutory mechanism for declassification and release of FISA Court opinions consistent with national security. It establishes a process for appointment of an amicus curiae to assist the FISA Court and FISA Court of Review in appropriate matters. It provides reforms to national security letters, requiring review of the need for their secrecy. The bill also closes potential gaps in collection authorities and increases the maximum criminal penalty for materially supporting a foreign terrorist organization.

Overall, the significant reforms contained in this legislation will provide the public greater confidence in how our intelligence activities are carried out and in the oversight of those activities, while ensuring vital national security authorities remain in place. You have our commitment that we will notify Congress if we find that provisions of this law significantly impair the Intelligence Community's ability to protect national security. We urge the Congress to pass this bill promptly.

Sincerely,

LORETTA E. LYNCH,
Attorney General.

JAMES R. CLAPPER,
Director of National Intelligence.

Mr. LEAHY. But even more importantly, last week the House of Representatives passed the USA FREEDOM Act of 2015 with an overwhelming vote of 338 to 88. At a time when the public says Congress is locked in partisan gridlock, look at this overwhelming vote of Republicans and Democrats for the USA FREEDOM Act. Well, the Senate ought to do the same thing the House did.

We can keep our country safe without a government database of billions of Americans' phone records. I think about Richard Clarke, who is a former counterterrorism official. He spent six months examining this program as a member of the President's Review Group. He concluded the program has "no benefit." We do not need it, and, more importantly, Americans do not want it.

I fear that if Congress does not end this bulk collection program, it will only open the door to the next dragnet surveillance program. Next time it will not just be phone records. It might be location information or medical records or credit card records. That is why it is so important to stop it now.

Some will say Congress doesn't need to act because the Second Circuit has already ruled that this program is illegal. I have read the court's decision, I agree with it, and I hope this panel decision will ultimately be upheld by the Supreme Court. But there are other pending lawsuits and it could be months or even years before we know how the courts will ultimately rule on this issue.

In addition, the USA FREEDOM Act doesn't just end bulk collection under section 215 and the other national security authorities; it also contains other important reforms that cannot be won through legal challenges, such as new transparency measures and a panel of

experts from which the FISA Court can draw on for amicus support. So the courts made it very clear Congress has to act.

Congress has spent years working on these issues, with numerous hearings. The Senate last year came up with basically the same bill the House has just overwhelmingly passed. We shouldn't be staying around here talking about whether we are going to go over the brink. We are going to put our intelligence community under pressure.

The USA FREEDOM Act is a responsible solution that can pass both Chambers today, including with a majority vote for it in this body today. Its enactment will ensure that these expiring provisions do not sunset. I urge Senators to support it.

Let us not play politics with the security of this country. Let us talk about what really can be done, what has been done in a responsible, bipartisan way in the other body, and let us step up and do the same in the Senate. That is what I would urge, not this brinkmanship which will actually bring about the end of all of these provisions. Maybe some would like that. I think we have a better balance here with the USA FREEDOM Act.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum, and ask unanimous consent that the time be equally divided between the two parties.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO SONNY DIXON

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, it is not often that anyone comes to the floor of the Senate to praise a journalist one way or another; but in Georgia, on the 31st of May of this year, Sonny Dixon of Savannah, GA, will retire after 18 years of being the anchor at WTOG in Savannah, GA.

Sonny Dixon is a rare breed indeed in terms of political reporters because he has actually been in elected office, serving for years in the Georgia Legislature, some of those years with me. I know him as a friend, I know him as a professional, and I know him as coastal Georgia's best anchorman, period.

He was awarded the Edward R. Murrow Award and the Associated Press award for best anchor in Georgia. He has been recognized by everyone who can do so for his professionalism, his knowledge, his skill, and his talent.

It is a privilege for me to acknowledge today on the floor of the Senate his 18 years of service as an anchor, his 10 years of service in the Georgia Legislature, and his lifetime of commitment to the greatest State of all, the

State of Georgia, to the betterment of his community, to the betterment of Savannah, the first capital of the State.

So as we take this moment in time to pause, I want to congratulate Sonny Dixon on a great career and a great recognition that is well earned.

TRIBUTE TO ROY ROBERTS

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I would like to talk about Roy Roberts from Walton County, GA. It is not often that a Senator from Georgia rises to pay tribute to a Kentucky basketball player, but Roy Roberts played for the famous Adolf Rupp in the 1960s and was an All-SEC basketball player for the University of Kentucky. He was a great player and made many all-star teams and received many awards, but he came back to Georgia to ranch and farm 1,000 acres, raise Hereford cows, and, with his two brothers, make Walton County, GA, the centerpiece of our State.

He has annually participated in many things that involve politics and public involvement in Walton County and has helped to lead Walton County to be one of the leading Republican counties in the State of Georgia.

Most notable is the Roy Roberts annual barbecue, which takes place next Tuesday in Walton County, GA, where over 1,000 Georgians and Presidential candidates from all over the country will come to meet at Roy Roberts' farm, enjoy a little barbecue, and enjoy the best of grassroots politics.

Were it not for people like Roy Roberts, we wouldn't have the body politic we have, we wouldn't have the democracy we have, and Georgia would not be the great State it is.

I am pleased to rise today and commend to everyone the work of citizen Roy Roberts, a great American, a great Georgian, and a pretty doggone good basketball player for the University of Kentucky.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative 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.

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it was just a few weeks ago that the Senate took up and passed S. 178, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. This bill took us a while to get through but ultimately garnered unanimous support from this Chamber with a vote of 99 to 0. I am happy to report that the House of Representatives will take up and pass this bill later on today, and this vital legislation will then head to the President for his signature.