

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I was not going to speak again, but I was prompted to by my colleague from Alabama, a friend and someone for whom I have great respect. The presentation by my colleague from Alabama suggested that President Obama is moving in the direction of disarming us, the implication is that of injuring our national security by proposing that we have fewer nuclear weapons. Let me make a point that I think is so important for the record.

I hope it is not now or ever considered a source of weakness for this country to aspire to have a planet with fewer nuclear weapons. It ought to be a source of strength that we understand it becomes our burden as a world leader—an economic leader and nuclear power—to try to reduce the number of nuclear weapons on this Earth.

This President has not proposed anything that would injure our national security. He is not proposing anything that is unilateral. He has negotiated and his team has negotiated a very strong arms reduction treaty with the Russians.

I know there has been great discussion about modernization, whether there is enough money, about why tactical nuclear weapons were not included, the issue of whether it limits us with respect to missile defense. All of those issues have been answered. All have been responded to.

The question, it seems to me, for us now and for all Americans, and particularly those who serve in Congress in the future, is will we be a world leader in pushing for a reduction in the number of nuclear weapons on this planet?

There are some 25,000 nuclear weapons on this planet. The loss of just one of those weapons, into the hands of a terrorist or rogue nation who might then explode it in a major city on Earth would change everything.

My colleagues are probably tired of hearing me say it, but in my desk I have kept a piece of a Soviet Union bomber, a very small piece of a wing strut from a Soviet Union bomber. We did not shoot it down. We negotiated that bomber down by paying money to saw the wings off.

Nuclear arms reduction treaties work. We know they work. There are Russian submarines that were not destroyed in battle. We ground them up and took them apart. The wings were sawed off bombers, and they were sold for scrap. Nuclear missiles in silos with nuclear warheads aimed at American cities are gone.

I will give an example. One was in Ukraine. Now sunflower seeds adorn that pasture where there was a missile with a nuclear weapon aimed at America.

We know these arms reduction treaties work because we have seen them work. Fewer nuclear weapons, fewer delivery vehicles, bombers, submarines, missiles—we know this works.

My colleague seemed to suggest that it would be a horrible thing if the entire world were rid of nuclear weapons. I hope that every Senator would aspire to have that be the case, a world in which there was not one weapon left, for almost surely every offensive weapon on this planet has always been used. We need to be very concerned about the number of nuclear weapons, the spread of nuclear weapons, the need, the desire for terrorists to acquire nuclear weapons. That is why these treaties and these negotiations on arms reduction are so unbelievably important.

Never has it been more important because now there is a new threat. They do not wear uniforms. They do not belong to one country. It is the terrorist threat. And they strive mightily to acquire nuclear weapons.

This treaty negotiated at the start by the previous President and concluded by this President, in my judgment, strengthens this country, represents our best national security interests.

I ask the question of anyone who believes that it is a threat for us to begin reducing nuclear weapons through arms negotiations with others who have nuclear weapons: Who, if not us, will lead the way to do that? If not us, who? Is there another country they think will aspire to provide leadership to reduce the number of nuclear weapons? If there is, tell us the name because we all know better than that.

This responsibility falls on our shoulders. We are the leading nuclear power on this Earth. It is our responsibility, it is this country's responsibility to lead. I don't ever want anybody to suggest it is some sort of weakness for this President or any President to engage in arms reduction negotiations. That is a source of strength.

This treaty was negotiated carefully. I was on the national security working group. We had briefing after briefing in top-secret venues. This treaty was carefully negotiated. It represents our best interests. It represents a reduction of nuclear weapons, a reduction of delivery vehicles and represents, in my judgment, another step in reducing the nuclear threat. It is not even a giant step, but it certainly is a step in the right direction.

This represents our best national security interests, and this President has demonstrated, yes, he wants a world with fewer nuclear weapons. He wants a world, as would I, with no nuclear weapons at some point. But this President would never allow negotiations or never allow circumstances in which this country is unarmed or unprepared or unable to meet its national security needs. He has not done that, not in this treaty, and will not do it in the future.

I did want to stand up and say that because of the comments earlier by the Senator who suggested there is some sort of weakness for a country that aspires to have a reduction of nuclear weapons on this planet.

Let me finally say, I have spoken at length on this floor about the severity

of losing even just one nuclear weapon. I have told the story about a CIA agent code-named Dragonfire who reported 1 month after 9/11 that a 10-kiloton nuclear weapon had been stolen from Russia and that nuclear weapon had been smuggled into New York City and was to be detonated. There was an apoplectic seizure in this town about it because no one knew what to do about it. They did not even notify the mayor of New York.

They discovered a month later that was probably not a credible piece of information. But as they did the diagnosis of it, they discovered it is plausible someone could have acquired a 10-kiloton nuclear weapon from Russia, it was plausible; if they had done that, they could have smuggled it into an American city and if terrorists did that they could have detonated it. Then we are not talking about 3,000 deaths, we are talking about 100,000, 200,000 deaths.

The work we have done in so many areas, the work in this administration, let me say, to secure loose nuclear materials, circumstances where plutonium or highly enriched uranium in the size of a liter or, in one case, in the size of a small can of soda, enough to kill tens and tens of thousands of people with a nuclear weapon—this is serious business. At a time when we debate a lot of issues—serious and not so serious—this is serious business.

I think the work that has been done by the chairman and ranking member in recent days—I watched a lot of this and watched it over this year—is extraordinary work. But so too is the work by this President, by the negotiators. My colleague described the folks at the State Department who had a significant role as well.

Let us not ever think it is a source of weakness to be negotiating verifiable reductions in nuclear weapons among those who possess them. That is a source of strength, and it is important for our kids and grandchildren who can succeed by continuing to do that with treaties that make the best sense for this country's national security interests.

I see the Senator from Massachusetts does not yet have a unanimous consent request, but I know all my colleagues are anxious to see one.

I yield the floor, and I expect, as the majority leader indicated, within the next half hour or so we will be voting, and I think that is good news. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

INTEREST ON LAWYER TRUST ACCOUNTS

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I rise to discuss and ask unanimous consent for consideration of H.R. 6398. I

will get to the unanimous consent language in a moment, but right now I want to describe what this is about. Then I wish to yield to my colleague from Georgia to add a little bit of the impact of this issue.

The issue is this: In all 50 States in America, lawyers have to put clients' funds into trust accounts. Under the law, they are not allowed to earn interest on these accounts. Over time, an arrangement has been worked out whereby the banks pay interest, but it does not go to the clients; it goes to fund civil legal services for those who cannot afford those services.

This arrangement is in great jeopardy if we do not pass this bill today. I will expand on that jeopardy in a moment, but at this point I simply am going to yield to my colleague from Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Oregon. This is very important work, and we are in our late hour. Sometimes we do our best in the late hour.

The unintended consequence of the Dodd-Frank legislation with regard to IOLTA is it not being extended and we are going to literally have thousands of escrow accounts held by law firms and attorneys, real estate transactions, dispute resolution transactions, and beneficial programs that will have to be spread among many more banks because the insurance level, which is now limited, drops to \$250,000. It would force the transfer of escrow account money out of any number of banks. At a time when capital is critical in small community banks, the unintended consequence might have been to take them below tier one capital requirements and put them in a stress situation.

I commend the distinguished Senator from Oregon for his work on this legislation. I thank the Senator from Louisiana, Mr. VITTER, for his consent for us to bring this forward. I give wholehearted support to the unanimous consent request.

I yield back to the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I appreciate so much the partnership of my colleague from Georgia. He has laid out clearly the impact of a failure to fix this legislation on our community banks where lawyers, exercising their fiduciary responsibilities, would have to move their trust accounts out of these special accounts where the interest goes to legal services and legal education and into no-interest-bearing accounts so that no one gains from that movement. In the course of it, they would be moving funds often from community banks to other institutions, imperiling these community banks.

I wish to address the other side of this issue, which is the important work these funds do in all 50 States. I will speak specifically to the State of Oregon, but there are parallels because

all 50 States participate with these accounts.

In Oregon, we have, first, the association of Oregon Legal Services Program, its primary source of civil legal assistance available to low-income Oregonians. To give a sense, if a woman is having a big challenge with domestic violence, she can get legal aid through this type of assistance. If a family is trying to struggle with a mistake on a foreclosure process so they can save their home, they can get assistance through this program. They have 20 offices throughout the State of Oregon to serve Oregonians living in poverty.

Second is the Juvenile Rights Project. This provides legal services to children and families through individual representation in juvenile court and school proceedings to help children who are in extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

A third is Disability Rights Oregon, the Oregon Advocacy Center, which assists those who are disabled, who are victims of abuse or neglect, or have difficulty acquiring health care or need to exercise their rights in regard to special education. They can turn to the Oregon Advocacy Center-Disability Rights of Oregon for help.

In addition, these funds pay for legal-oriented education for our K-12 students. Let me give an example of three programs in Oregon. These programs assist 15,000 students in our State.

One is the High School Mock Trial Competition. This type of mock trial competition is an enormous learning exercise for our students in how our courts function and how the facts of a case are presented and how the principles of law are applied.

Then we have the summer institute training for teachers so that social studies teachers can learn more about the role of law and be more effective in conveying that vision to our students.

Then I also want to mention the We The People Program on the Constitution and Bill of Rights. Here in this Chamber, we discuss the Constitution and the Bill of Rights virtually on a daily basis. Virtually every day on this floor, we discuss how these founding documents affect how our laws are applied and how freedoms are protected in the United States of America. This program helps our children learn those fundamental principles. Sort of the heart and spirit of the American democratic world are conveyed through this We The People Program.

I also wish to commend a whole host of banks in Oregon that have agreed not only to pay interest on these lawyer trust accounts—and IOLTA stands for interest on lawyer trust accounts—but to pay 1 percent, which is above the going rate on most types of transaction accounts. They do that because they benefit from the deposits, and they know their communities benefit from these services and these programs.

This legislation will resolve a problem in which lawyers, applying their fi-

duciary responsibilities, would have had to withdraw their funds from these accounts and put them in other non-interest-bearing accounts, to no benefit to anyone and to a great deal of harm to so many.

INTEREST ON LAWYERS TRUST ACCOUNTS

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent, as if in legislative session and as if in morning business, that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 6398, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6398) to require the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation to fully insure Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 6398) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I wish to thank the Chair and my colleague from Georgia who understood and presented so effectively the impact on our community banks that are working hard to get funds out to our Main Street businesses so we can create jobs and put our economy back on track.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I commend the Senator from Oregon and thank him for his help on this important issue for people all over the United States, not just in Oregon and Georgia but around the country. This is a great effort, and I commend him on it.

TREATY WITH RUSSIA ON MEASURES FOR FURTHER REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS—Continued

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I wish to take an additional minute, if I might—the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee is on the floor—to say, in addition to my statement I made 2 days ago in a speech on the floor with regard to the START treaty, that I wish to thank the chairman and the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee for the accommodating process from day one in April until today, where the treaty will ultimately pass on the floor of the Senate.

Legislation is about improving ideas and making sure the interest of the