

put them instead under consideration to be a judge with great objectivity. We have a broadly based commission. I think the best test of his fairness and objectivity and his ability to judge people not based on anything other than the merits of the case in front of him is testified more than anything to by the fact that the broadly based judicial advisory commission recommended his nomination to us as one of the people to be considered, and we recommended him to the President.

The American Bar Association has also spoken on this issue. He has been recommended unanimously as qualified for the Federal bench by the Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary of the American Bar Association.

So we are in a position here where we have a judicial emergency on the Eastern District Court. We have a situation where the delays that result deprive Americans of what they are entitled to. We have a nominee who has been recommended by a broadly based commission that Senator STABENOW and I have appointed. He has been given a unanimous rating of "qualified" by the American Bar Association. And I think his commitment has been shown not just by his decades of service as a trial judge but by the way he answered the questions in his confirmation hearing. He said—and he has shown this in practice—that "my personal beliefs, both past and present, have no bearing on the decisions I make in court." The notion that he would insert his own personal judgment in place of the law is contradicted by not just his testimony but by a record of decisions that indicate he abides by the concept of judge as impartial arbiter.

Senator STABENOW and I strongly urge our colleagues to confirm Judge Drain. We hope that can happen in the next hour.

Madam President, I yield the floor and ask that the time between now and the time for voting be equally divided between the majority and the minority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The quorum call will be equally divided.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

POLITICIZING ISRAEL

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Madam President, I rise today out of disbelief with the rhetoric coming from Republicans and their Presidential candidate concerning the U.S. relationship with Israel. Frankly, it pains me to see that a political trip to Israel is carried with a message to scare the Israelis that President Obama and this administration are not as fast and as complete as they are.

I have had numerous trips to Israel. One was the 6-day war in 1967, when the Israelis had battled with the Egyptians, and I got there shortly after the guns stopped shooting. I went to the Sinai Desert and watched the Israelis on guard while the Egyptian soldiers were carrying necessary items, such as water and food, for their people. I was reminded then that the Israelis always have to be on guard. They are never free to go about their domestic interests and problems without having one eye open to make certain the rockets that are being aimed at them aren't going to tear their people apart again, as their people have experienced—the worst of human relations, a blight on mankind which can never be forgotten, and the Israelis remember it very clearly.

Unfortunately, Republicans want to use our relationship with Israel as a political game, which is terrible for America's national security and bad for Israel. The implication that we are weak in our support for Israel is foul play and encourages Israel's enemies to look and say: Well, maybe America is not as solid on its support of Israel, because Mr. Romney, when asked the question about what he would do differently with Israel, says he would do just the opposite of what President Obama has done.

We have built a relationship between our countries that is firm and unshakable since 1948. To try to clumsily interfere with that is shameful. Republicans are distorting the state of U.S.-Israel relations for political gain and sending the wrong signal to the rest of the world.

When you listen to the Republicans—especially their Presidential candidate, Mitt Romney discuss Israel, reality is often replaced with distortion and fantasy. Mitt Romney says President Obama has not been a friend of Israel. That couldn't be any further from the truth. When we examine the record, it is clear that President Obama shares my convictions about the enduring bond between Israel and the United States. It is clear that there is no greater friend to Israel than this President.

But you don't have to take my word for it. Here is a chart that carries a message from a distinguished leader in Israel, the Israeli Defense Minister, Ehud Barak. He says very clearly:

[T]his administration under President Obama is doing in regard to our security more than anything that I can remember in the past.

He made certain that it is quite understood that the relationship with Israel and America is solid and well-balanced. This is coming from, as I said, a distinguished, decorated military leader. He helped plan the historic raid on Entebbe to rescue Israelis who were held in a grounded airplane. He understands Israel's security.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called the Obama administration's security policy for

Israel "unprecedented." But if you listen to Republicans over here in the United States, they say we have all but abandoned Israel's security. They are encouraging hostile neighbors with their misrepresentations. Shame on them.

Governor Romney in particular has demonstrated frightening ignorance about Israel and its security needs. The prime example of this behavior is the Republican Presidential nominee's complete inability to articulate what exactly he would do differently than President Obama. When asked about what his policy regarding Israel would be, and I have to quote him here, he said: "I'd look at the things the President has done and do the opposite."

What a threatening statement that is. He said he wants to do the opposite of President Obama. So let's look at what that would mean. Obama blocked Palestinian statehood when it was brought up in the U.N. He had a big fight on his hands to keep that from happening. So that means Romney, as President, would allow Palestinian statehood in the U.N. He said he is going to do the opposite.

Record high U.S. aid for Israel? Romney is going to do the opposite. That means he has to lower the U.S. aid for Israel.

Obama says all options on the table for dealing with Iran are there. That means that Mitt Romney, if President, would only use "containment" of a nuclear Iran as his yardstick for dealing with this incredible problem.

So, everybody, beware. Israelis, beware. Don't be taken in by this and don't let people in America be taken in by this. They know that Israel is America's best friend.

Last September, when the Palestinian Authority aggressively pursued a U.N. vote on statehood, that is when President Obama stood strong and blocked it. If we are to believe Mitt Romney, however, as indicated here, he would have allowed this unilateral action on Palestinian statehood to proceed.

Just a few days ago, President Obama signed into law a new bill that will strengthen U.S. security with Israel even further. But again, if we are to believe Mitt Romney, he would have lowered Israeli aid and weakened, thusly, Israel's defenses against the threats it constantly faces.

And last, President Obama has stood absolutely firm in his call to stop Iran from development of a nuclear weapon. The Obama administration has been clear that all options are on the table to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear threat to its neighbors. President Obama has put in place the strongest sanctions ever against Iran, sanctions that have punished and isolated Iran more than ever before. If we are to believe Mitt Romney here as well, under President Romney America's policy toward Iran would be one of accepting a nuclear-armed Iran that threatens Israel's—and the world's—very existence.

The bottom line is this: These are not simple problems and they will require real leadership to tackle. We cannot play games with America's best friend. Israel continues to be threatened by rockets launched by Hamas from the Gaza Strip. Iran appears intent on developing a nuclear weapon and is the foremost state sponsor of terror. But instead of approaching these issues with the careful consideration they deserve, the Republicans seem intent on twisting reality for political gain.

We see it on the domestic front, too. The Republican leader said—he said it here—his party's top priority is to make President Obama a one-term President, and they are using any pretense they can to establish that. Their top priorities, then, clearly do not include helping everyday Americans by creating jobs, improving our schools, or strengthening our health care system. If we take Mitt Romney at his word, they are certainly not aimed at doing what is in Israel's best interest. And when they simply wish for our President's failure, they are hurting America's chance for success.

When they fail to put forth any ideas of their own, they show themselves to be unfit to govern, unable to lead. Their mission, their primary mission is to bring down the record that President Obama has established. We have recaptured a lot of jobs. Still, we have a long way to go to get our economy in better motion than it is, but everybody knows we are working on it. We have seen remarkable growth in jobs in the automobile industry, which looked as though it might have ended up being unable to function in this country of ours.

The whole world knows that America's leadership depends on its domestic strength and not on casual political rhetoric that challenges America's loyalty to its friends.

I yield the floor and 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.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I rise today to strongly urge my colleagues to support the nomination of an outstanding judge, Gershwin Drain, to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. We will have an opportunity to vote in a few minutes. Senator LEVIN and I join together in the strongest possible recommendation to our colleagues on this nomination. I have known Judge Drain for many years. I can tell you he is a very impressive individual with a long record of excellent public service. He has served in the district court, the Detroit Recorder's Court and the Wayne County Circuit Court.

He is active in the community. When I am in the community and have the opportunity to be at events that are important for people, for families, for communities, for children, for economic development, Judge Drain is always there, supporting the efforts of Detroit and of Michigan.

He is of course dedicated to his incredible family, who I know is very proud of him, as we are. But don't take my word for it. The American Bar Association Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary unanimously rated Judge Drain "qualified" to serve on the District Court. He was named a "Man Of Excellence" by the Michigan Chronicle newspaper, and the Detroit News named him "Michiganian of the Year"—both very prestigious recognitions in Michigan.

This is a very important judgeship that has been vacant for more than 2 years. It is important for people in Michigan and throughout the eastern district to be able to have the full measure of justice they expect and deserve when coming before the court. It is very important that we fill this vacancy.

I am appreciative and proud that the President of the United States has nominated him. I appreciate the support of the Judiciary Committee in bringing this nomination forward and the agreement to allow us to vote on this nominee.

Judge Drain has the qualifications, the experience, and the temperament for this very important position. I strongly urge my colleagues to support his nomination and to vote yes when it comes before us in the next few minutes.

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

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Gershwin A. Drain, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan?

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. KYL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANDERS). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 189 Ex.]

YEAS—55

Akaka	Gillibrand	Nelson (FL)
Baucus	Hagan	Pryor
Begich	Harkin	Reed
Bennet	Inouye	Reid
Bingaman	Johnson (SD)	Rockefeller
Blumenthal	Kerry	Sanders
Boxer	Klobuchar	Schumer
Brown (MA)	Kohl	Sessions
Brown (OH)	Landrieu	Shaheen
Cantwell	Lautenberg	Stabenow
Cardin	Leahy	Tester
Carper	Levin	Udall (CO)
Casey	Lieberman	Udall (NM)
Coats	Manchin	Warner
Conrad	McCaskill	Webb
Coons	Menendez	Whitehouse
Durbin	Merkley	Wyden
Feinstein	Mikulski	
Franken	Murray	

NAYS—41

Alexander	Enzi	McCain
Ayotte	Graham	McConnell
Barrasso	Grassley	Murkowski
Blunt	Hatch	Nelson (NE)
Boozman	Heller	Paul
Burr	Hoeben	Portman
Chambliss	Hutchison	Risch
Coburn	Inhofe	Roberts
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Collins	Johanns	Snowe
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Thune
Cornyn	Kyl	Toomey
Crapo	Lee	Wicker
DeMint	Lugar	

NOT VOTING—4

Kirk	Rubio
Moran	Vitter

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate resume legislative session.

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

BURMESE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY ACT

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for S. 3326, a trade package that includes legislation sponsored by myself and Senator MCCONNELL to renew the import ban on Burma for another year.

I have been involved in the struggle for freedom and democracy in Burma for 15 years.

In 1997, former Senator William Cohen and I authored legislation requiring the President to ban new U.S. investment in Burma if he determined that the Government of Burma had physically harmed, rearrested or exiled Aung San Suu Kyi or committed large-scale repression or violence against the democratic opposition.

President Clinton issued the ban in a 1997 Executive order.

In 2003, after the regime attempted to assassinate Aung San Suu Kyi, Senator MCCONNELL and I introduced the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003, which placed a complete ban on imports from Burma. It allowed that ban to be renewed one year at a time.

It was signed into law and has been renewed annually since then.

It expired on July 26 which is why this legislation is before us today.

In past years, the debate on renewing the import ban on Burma has focused