

the Navy to become fully auditable, as required by Congress, raising questions about why the Navy would spend \$870 million on a program that would not even fulfill congressional mandates.

This lapse in oversight is unacceptable, which is why the subcommittee's bipartisan report recommends that the Department of Defense review its internal policies to make sure information technology systems that receive BPR certifications on paper are actually implementing BPR in reality.

These certifications are required for a reason: They help decisionmakers in the Department of Defense and Congress make informed decisions on whether a given program is ready to go further in the acquisition process and whether taxpayer funds should be authorized and appropriated for that purpose.

As I mentioned earlier, information technology procurement is not only a Department of Defense problem. In November of last year, in response to the disastrous healthcare.gov rollout, President Obama himself said:

One of the things [the Federal Government] does not do well is information technology procurement. This is kind of a systematic problem that we have across the board.

I agree with him that information technology procurement in the Federal Government is in desperate need of reform. The White House's Office of Management and Budget has expressed significant concerns about 42 Federal information technology investments, totaling \$2 billion. According to the Government Accountability Office: "despite spending hundreds of billions on I.T. since 2000, the federal government has experienced failed I.T. projects and has achieved little of the productivity improvements that private industry has realized from I.T."

The Department of Homeland Security's Secure Border Initiative Program, or SBInet, was another notable major IT procurement failure. My colleagues might remember SBInet as the high-tech surveillance program that, when it began in 2006, promised a single "transformational" integrated security system for hundreds of miles of border protection on our southern border. Well, I remember SBInet as a system that, according to the Government Accountability Office, cost \$1.2 billion and was on a path to spend 564 percent more than its initial cost estimates when it was canceled in 2010. Once again, ever-changing requirements, a lack of internal management controls, and not really understanding what we were trying to procure, how hard it would actually be, and planning effectively for those difficulties, led to the Federal Government squandering over \$1 billion with nothing to show for it.

The Federal Government's incessant inability to procure major information technology systems is especially concerning since, in the coming months, the Department of Defense will be selecting a contractor to develop a cen-

tralized military health care information technology system. That program is supposed to provide seamless sharing of health data among the Department of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and private sector providers. In light of the recent tragic consequences stemming from mismanagement at the Phoenix VA Health Care System and VA hospitals around the country, we cannot afford to further jeopardize veterans' health care because of information technology failures. Yet any serious effort to reform how care is delivered to our veterans will largely turn on the effective delivery and integration of this system. We need to put the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs on notice that we will monitor this program carefully throughout its acquisition.

In closing, there is still much to be done at the Department of Defense and throughout the Federal Government to ensure the acquisition of large information technology programs is improved. If we do not want to repeat past failures, the Department of Defense's attempts to procure large business IT systems must be supported by the right leadership, proper planning, and a workforce that is open to changing "business as usual" in order to help make sure the Department operates more efficiently, effectively, and transparently.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLARIFYING INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY NOMINATIONS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 470, which the clerk will report by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 470) amending Senate Resolution 400 (94th Congress) to clarify the responsibility of committees of the Senate in the provision of the advice and consent of the Senate to nominations to positions in the intelligence community.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the resolution is agreed to, and the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The resolution (S. Res. 470) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in the RECORD of Wednesday, June 11, 2014.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

BORDER CRISIS

Mr. CORNYN. This Wednesday, it is reported President Obama will be traveling to my State of Texas, but he will not visit the border between Texas and Mexico, the site of what he has himself called a growing humanitarian crisis. Instead, on his 2-day trip, he will fundraise and apparently deliver remarks on the economy. It is a little ironic, given the economic boom in Texas relative to the rest of the country, that the President would choose to come to Texas and to lecture us on what he thinks we should do about the economy, but my hope is he would come to learn from Texas and not just give another lecture.

Today, the White House Press Secretary, Josh Earnest, said the President was "well aware" of the crisis on the border. As the distinguished Presiding Officer knows, I recently visited McAllen, TX, myself 1 week ago today, and it is heartbreaking to see these young children without their parents. It is difficult to hear the horrific stories about the journey these children made from their homes in Central America through Mexico, dodging assault, kidnapping, various and other sundry crimes, and then finally making their way into the United States. So it is easy in one sense to see why the President might prefer to stay away rather than to come, learn, and listen for himself, particularly in light of the sad stories he is going to hear or he would hear if he decided to come.

But I think the problem speaks for itself when the President, who would prefer to hang out with campaign donors and other political supporters, would decide not to have any interaction with those who are directly affected by his failed policies—in this case the failed immigration policies that led to a full-blown humanitarian crisis.

Instead of taking the easy way out, I wish the President would step up and lead—and he would learn, perhaps, something he did not already know or that he thinks he knows and which is absolutely wrong. It is puzzling, and it is frustrating that the President of the United States chooses the path he apparently is going to take rather than one that will help him solve problems.

We know the President last week stood in the Rose Garden in front of the American people and at the same time he asked for money to help address this problem—and it is reportedly on the order of \$2 billion—in the very next breath he announced he is looking at expanding the very same policies that have helped create this crisis, create the impression there will be no consequences for coming to the country in violation of our laws. It is disheartening, it is disappointing, and it is extremely dangerous.

This week, during his trip to Texas, it would take the President less than 1 hour on Air Force One to visit the border and to see what I and so many of my colleagues have seen firsthand, a

very sad situation that could have been prevented. But now that it has happened, it needs to be addressed in a bipartisan way. He would see what I saw, which is children separated from their parents with no certainty about the future, children who have endured unspeakable hardships and cruelty at the hands of some of the most vile thugs on the planet, the cartels, who view them as a commodity as they do drugs and weapons. They view these children as a commodity, something to make money off of.

The Border Patrol in South Texas and along the border is doing a very professional job under very difficult circumstances, but they are simply overwhelmed. Repeatedly, we will hear of the Border Patrol—law enforcement officers—basically having to divert their attention from doing those law enforcement responsibilities and duties to basically taking care of children, making sure they are fed, their medical condition is being attended to, and they have a safe place to stay while going through the procedures there at the border.

I commend the Border Patrol and all of our Federal law enforcement agencies for making their resources and time stretch as far as possible for these children while the Commander in Chief has decided to do something else.

I realize how controversial and polarizing this issue can be, but at least in some respects it should take precedence over partisan politics and fund-raisers.

What I don't understand is how the President can send us a bill for \$2 billion—which he reportedly is going to do tomorrow, apparently asking us for some changes in the existing law—and then to simply be missing in action when it comes to learning for himself the very facts that are necessary for him to be able to make the case not only to Congress but to the American people for why both of those were necessary.

President Obama evidently needs a wakeup call, and visiting the border and learning firsthand about the severity and causes of this ongoing crisis will be that wakeup call.

Again, I urge the President to visit the border this week during his fund-raising trip to Texas.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. COATS. Madam President, the Supreme Court issued a ruling last week that I wish to discuss for a few moments today. This decision marks a very important development in the ongoing debate our country is engaged in on the subject of religious freedom.

In a 5-to-4 decision, the Supreme Court reported that the contraceptive coverage mandate imposed by the Affordable Care Act on family-owned companies such as Hobby Lobby stores

and Conestoga Wood Specialties violates the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

These two companies are owned by individuals who have faith-based objections to providing access to contraceptives that can terminate a pregnancy.

While it is true some faith-based institutions object to the mandate on religious grounds, their insurance companies which are covering them and their employees in that business are mandated to provide support for contraception. It is also true, but not really distinguished and noticed in the media, that there are a number of institutions which are saying: You can't couch this under the umbrella of contraception, you have to understand that what we are opposed to here is not all forms of birth control.

Hobby Lobby has been clear to state that they fall under this category, although they oppose the morning-after pill and other contraceptives that induce abortions.

The Supreme Court's ruling means employers such as Hobby Lobby or Grote Industries in my home State of Indiana—a family-run auto lighting company—will not be forced to take actions contrary to their religious beliefs. I applaud this ruling issued by the Court because freedom of religion is a core American principle guaranteed by our First Amendment, and through this decision the Court has affirmed that the administration simply can't pick and choose when and how or whether to adhere to the Constitution.

While this ruling is a welcome positive step, it is important to note that religious freedom is still under attack across this country. It is under attack because the Court's ruling applies only to a very narrow rule, family-owned for-profit companies such as Hobby Lobby, when many faith-based organizations, charities, hospitals, educational institutions are still required to facilitate insurance coverage that includes contraceptives and abortion-inducing drugs despite their religious beliefs and despite their moral objections. Requiring these faith-based institutions and businesses to betray the fundamental tenets of their beliefs is, I believe, unconstitutional, and the administration's so-called accommodation is far from adequate in this fundamental breach of our First Amendment rights under our Constitution. Those impacted by this mandate are a large and diverse group that includes Indiana-based institutions such as Grace College in Winona Lake, IN, the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, and many other schools based on a religious foundation that find a moral and religious objection.

Despite conscious objections and the University of Notre Dame's clearly outlined standards and values, Notre Dame was told by a Federal appeals court late last year that it must comply with the ObamaCare mandate, which they are appealing.

My alma mater, one of those institutions, Wheaton College, was told by the

Supreme Court only last week that it doesn't have to abide by the contraceptive coverage mandate until the judicial system determines whether the administration's requirement is valid over religious institutions and other nonprofits.

Just an aside, it was surprising to read this morning in the Wall Street Journal that—in fact, it was disappointing and highly unusual—despite the Court explicitly stating its decision to grant Wheaton College a temporary injunction “should not be construed as an expression of the Court's views on the merits” of Wheaton's case, having explicitly stated that, one Justice wrote a dissenting opinion in which she essentially decided on the merits of the Wheaton case herself. That is the first time, in my recollection. I don't follow every decision of the Supreme Court, but I follow many of them—but it is surprising that a Justice would allow their ideological passion on a particular issue to so mischaracterize the ruling of the Court that simply provided for an injunction to give the time for the court system to make a ruling.

Nevertheless, that is not why I came to the floor this evening. I thought in terms of thinking through this issue and what I might say that it appears to be ideological bias on the Court that raised its ugly head here, and hopefully that will be retracted.

But whether it is Wheaton College, whether it is Notre Dame or Grace College or numerous other institutions, it is important to understand that in many of these institutions a thread of faith, a stream of water, runs through everything they do in those organizations, and particularly in those schools of higher learning and those entities that provide social services through the food banks, through dealing with the homeless. The element of faith is important to their success, it is important to their results, and it is important to their beliefs.

Whether it is faith in learning as the central part of institutions such as Notre Dame, Wheaton College, or others, or whether it is a homeless shelter in South Bend, IN—that is the combination of churches, university, city, county, some Federal funding, some local funding, and some volunteer funding—it is essential, as they have told me on one of my visits, that this ribbon of faith is essential to the success of their program and to the rehabilitation of those who walk through the front door, often homeless, and leave months and years later with the capabilities of full employment, gainful employment, and become homeowners instead of homeless.

Whether it is food banks or homeless shelters or other important organizations, so many of these are meeting needs of people across this Nation. But these institutions are seeing this ribbon of faith and the free exercise of religion constrained and restricted by this administration's mandate under the Obama health care law.