NOMINATION OF JAMES D. NEALON TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF HONDURAS

NOMINATION OF ROBERT A. WOOD FOR THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE AS U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

NOMINATION OF PAUL NATHAN JAENICHEN, SR., TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The assistant bill clerk read the nominations of James D. Nealon, of New Hampshire, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Honduras; Robert A. Wood, of New York, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament; and Paul Nathan Jaenichen, Sr., of Kentucky, to be Administrator of the Maritime Administration.

VOTE ON NEALON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Nealon nomination.

The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, we yield back time on all three nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, all time is yielded back.

Hearing no further debate, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of James D. Nealon, of New Hampshire, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Honduras?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON WOOD NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Robert A. Wood, of New York, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON JAENICHEN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Paul Nathan Jaenichen, Sr., of Kentucky, to be Administrator of the Maritime Administration?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROTECT WOMEN'S HEALTH FROM CORPORATE INTERFERENCE ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor today in support of the Not My Boss's Business Act. I thank Senator MURRAY and Senator UDALL for introducing this legislation to help address the recent Supreme Court decision.

Women have gone to the tops of the mountains and to outer space. Women are serving as CEOs, as scientists, and starting our own companies. Here in the Senate we have gone from no women to 20, and that is a great accomplishment.

But for all of our progress—and there has been a lot—this stubborn fact remains: Women still struggle to attain the basic health care services that allow them to plan their families, protect their health, and contribute to our economy. This is fundamentally an issue of fairness and an issue of equality.

I have always said that the Affordable Care Act is a beginning and not an end. I would like to see changes to that bill. I have sponsored changes to that bill. But the law does take significant steps forward on health care for women. One that is of particular importance to women is requiring that all health insurance plans cover FDA-approved forms of contraception. This decision was based on the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine.

The Institute of Medicine had good reason to include contraception as an essential preventive service. We know that pregnancies that are planned are good for moms; they are good for babies. Better access to contraception prevents unintended pregnancies—something we can all agree we want. We do not want unintended pregnancies. We do not want to have abortions. So better access to contraception, as has been proven time and time again, brings down those numbers. And access to birth control is essential for women to meet their career and their education and their family goals.

Not every employer was required to provide contraceptive coverage. Certain nonprofit religious employers were allowed an exemption. It protected the beliefs of religious nonprofits but could be implemented in a way that still ensured all women could receive the same preventive services in their health insurance.

What I do not believe is sensible, however, is allowing any for-profit business to ask for an exemption. That, in practice, is what the Hobby Lobby Supreme Court ruling could do and what the bill we are considering today would correct.

First, what this bill will not do: It will not force churches or religiously affiliated nonprofits to offer contraception coverage. This bill maintains their exemption. It will not force anyone to use contraception. That decision is and must remain with each person.

What this bill will do, however, is to add a provision to the Affordable Care Act's requirements that would prohibit an employer from denying coverage of a health care service that is required under Federal law. It clarifies that this requirement applies even under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act—the law that the Supreme Court ruled was violated by the contraception coverage requirement.

In other words, it says if you work for an American corporation, you can expect that your health insurance—which you work for and receive as part of your compensation—will cover the same basic preventive health benefits everyone else receives. It says that your boss—regardless of his or her religious beliefs—cannot pick and choose what benefits your health insurance covers.

This is common sense. A woman's decision about her birth control is between her and her doctor, not her employer. What she chooses to use her compensation for is really not her boss's business, whether we are talking about a salary or other compensation, including health insurance.

There is no doubt that women have come a long way. But when a woman's boss can step in, as a result of this narrowly decided Court decision—a 5–4 ruling—and prevent her from making the best health care decisions for her health, her career, and her future, it makes me wonder just how far we have actually come.

Mr. President, that is why I urge you to support this bill. I urge my colleagues to support this bill. This important legislation will help preserve the rights of employees while protecting religious employers. It will help women access the preventive services they need and it will prevent unintended pregnancies and improve the health of both women and their children. That is not just good for women; that is good for families, that is good for business, that is good for our economy, and that is good for our future.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to finish my remarks.

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

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today in defense of the most fundamental principle on which our Republic was founded—what is rightly recognized as our first freedom—religious liberty.

Our fellow citizens today do not think much of Congress. The Gallup organization, whose results are actually less grim than some other polls, gives Congress a job approval rating of just 15 percent. That figure has not risen above the teens in more than 3 years.

Now and then, however, Congress does rise to the occasion, putting aside partisan or ideological differences to achieve something important for our Nation and its citizens.

One example occurred in 1993—I had a lot to do with it—when liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans, stood to defend a fundamental human right. On October 27, 1993, this body passed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act by a vote of 97 to 3.

It went through the House by a unanimous vote. By mid-November the House had passed it unanimously and President Bill Clinton had signed it into law. I was there at the signing ceremony on the south lawn. Despite the overwhelming bipartisan support for final passage of RFRA, it took Congress 3 years to achieve that defense of religious freedom.

The House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights held hearings in 1990 and 1992, and the full Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing in 1992. Concerned citizens and groups came together to form the Coalition for the Free Exercise of Religion—a grassroots effort more diverse than any I have ever seen in all of my 38 years here. Americans of every political stripe joined hands to defend the first freedom mentioned in the Bill of Rights. The resulting legislation, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, allows the Federal Government to interfere with the exercise of religion only for the most compelling reason and only in the least restrictive way. This law was necessary because in 1990 the Supreme Court had changed the legal standard, making it easy, rather than difficult, for the government to burden religious exercise.

A bill recently introduced here in the Senate, S. 2578, would turn the clock back, requiring that Federal laws and regulations ignore rather than respect religious freedom. This is the first time in American history that the Congress will consider a bill intended to diminish the protections for the religious liberty of all Americans. It is part of a broader campaign to demonize religious freedom as the enemy, as an obstacle to certain political goals.

It is important for the American people to know the truth about how we got here. The Affordable Care Act requires that most employers provide insurance coverage at no cost to employees for what it calls preventive services. Regulations from the Department of Health and Human Services define that category as covering all forms of birth control approved by the Food and Drug Administration, including both contraceptives and methods that can act after conception.

The difference between a contraceptive and an abortifacient is the difference between preventing and taking human life. That discrepancy may be meaningless to some, but it is very important to many and can be a matter of the most profound moral and religious significance. As a result of the birth control mandate, many religious employers faced massive fines if they followed their religious beliefs, so some of them filed suit to prevent its enforcement.

This is exactly the kind of situation that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act was enacted to address, the kind of situation that should require the government to justify why it wants to interfere with the exercise of religion.

Cases brought by two companies owned by religious families made it to the Supreme Court. These companies do provide insurance coverage for the FDA's 16 methods of contraception, but they believe that doing so for its 4 methods of birth control that can cause abortion violates their deeply held religious beliefs.

Two weeks ago, in a case titled ''Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores,'' the Supreme Court ruled that the HHS birth control mandate does not sufficiently accommodate these employers' exercise of religion as required by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

It took a lot of work to establish RFRA's defense of religious freedom, but it would not take much work to destroy it. The bill we will soon consider, S. 2578, would in one fell swoop reduce the free exercise of religion from a fundamental human right to a cheap election-year prop.

RFRA was developed after months of discussion and debate. It was the product of bipartisan deliberation and considered judgment. I know. I was there. I was the one who talked Senator Kennedy into coming on this bill. When it was signed on the south lawn—when President Clinton signed it, Senator Kennedy was one of the most proud people there. This bill represents vindication of the fundamental and natural rights that we originally established government to protect.

By contrast, S. 2578 was thrown together in a matter of days. It has not received a single committee hearing in either Chamber. In fact, here in the Senate it is not even being sent to a legislative committee. The majority has put their finger to the political wind and decided that all they want is a show vote they can spin to their advantage in the election this fall. That is ridiculous. They ought to be ashamed.

One sign of what is really going on is the fact that the bill's ''findings'' are about four times as long as its actual provisions, and it reads more like a series of press releases than serious legislative language. The bill's supporters wish to ram it through Congress without meaningful deliberation, without hearings, without the kind of scrutiny that would expose this effort for what it is. The bill's findings, for example, say not one word about the exercise of religion that gave rise to the Hobby Lobby litigation in the first place. Instead, one of the bill's findings claims that those lawsuits were filed by employers who simply wanted to deny their employees health insurance coverage for birth control. I guess you can call it contraception. In reality, the employers do not want to take anything away from anyone. They simply ask, as the Religious Freedom Restoration Act requires, that laws and regulations about health insurance coverage also consider and balance their basic right to religious exercise.

I have heard proponents of this legislation make wild claims that corporations are denying access to health care, intruding into people's bedrooms, and even taking away their freedoms. Nonsense. Such claims do not even pass the laugh test. They are so clearly false that those who peddle such fiction must ignore both RFRA and the Supreme Court's decision in the Hobby Lobby case or deliberately distort them beyond recognition.

Just yesterday the Washington Post Fact Checker listed example after example of what it charitably described as the rhetoric getting way ahead of the facts as Democrats have made one outlandish claim after another.

Finding 19 in this bill is perhaps its most outrageous, claiming that legislation ''is intended to be consistent with the Congressional intent in enacting the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.'' But of course that claim is absurd on its face. Congress expressed its purpose in enacting RFRA in the text of that statute, including RFRA's finding that its legal standard applies ''in all cases where the free exercise of religion is substantially burdened.'' RFRA's most prominent backers in Congress also expressed its intent. Over in the House, for example, then-Representative CHARLES SCHUMER said that RFRA would restore the American tradition of ''allowing maximum religious freedom''—spoke about this bill, spoke glowingly about what it means on both sides of the floor.

The bill before us today does the opposite, requiring employers to provide insurance coverage ''notwithstanding any other provision of Federal law,'' including specifically the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. If a bill prohibiting consideration of religious exercise is consistent with the law requiring consideration of religious exercise, such as RFRA, then words have no meaning whatsoever.

We are also told that S. 2578 simply responds to the Supreme Court's recent decision in Hobby Lobby, but in reality

it goes much further. The Supreme Court's decision involved only the Affordable Care Act and the HHS birth control mandate, but this bill prohibits consideration of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act regarding insurance coverage of any health care item or service required by any Federal law or regulation. The Affordable Care Act and the HHS birth control mandate apply to employers with at least 50 employees, but this bill's much broader mandate applies to any employer regardless of size. The Hobby Lobby case involved a for-profit corporation, but this bill applies to any employer. This bill appears to be not so much a response to the Supreme Court's decision in Hobby Lobby as the attempt to broaden and extend the Affordable Care Act and the HHS birth control mandate.

The bill's mandate that health insurance coverage for any health care item or service under any Federal law or regulation be provided notwithstanding any other provision of Federal law seems to reach beyond the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Does it include, for example, the Hyde-Weldon amendment or other laws that have for more than 40 years protected health care providers and facilities from being forced to participate in abortion? Before you answer no, remember that no one thought RFRA's protections for religious freedom would ever be attacked as they are today.

Under S. 2578, the lone protections for the fundamental right of religious exercise would be the narrow statutory exemption for churches and houses of worship and the weak administrative accommodation for religious nonprofits that could be revoked at any time. Even worse, the bill would allow for a future reduction or elimination of this so-called accommodation but not for its expansion. Not only would religious freedom be diminished immediately but what is left would be subject to a one-way ratchet toward elimination.

Earlier this summer I spoke here on the Senate floor about how religious freedom in America has three key dimensions: It includes religious behavior as well as belief. It applies collectively as well as individually. It is public as well as private in scope.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act represents the full understanding of religious freedom. It requires that when Congress considers legislation or executive branch agencies consider regulations, they must take this fundamental freedom into account and give it the respect it deserves. S. 2578 would be the first bill to create an exemption from RFRA and the first bill explicitly to prohibit consideration of the fundamental right of religious exercise.

Five years after enacting the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, Congress enacted the International Religious Freedom Act, which established the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. That legislation declared that the ''right to freedom of religion undergirds the very origin and existence of the United States.'' The Senate passed that legislation by a vote of 98 to 0, including 10 Democrats who have today cosponsored the bill before us that would disregard freedom of religion. Those Democrats include the majority leader and the sponsor of S. 2578. They cannot have it both ways.

Like his predecessors, President Obama designated January 16 as Religious Freedom Day. In his proclamation, the President declared that ''my administration will remain committed to promoting religious freedom both at home and across the globe. We urge every country to recognize religious freedom as both a religious right and a key to a stable, prosperous and peaceful future.'' Actions speak louder than words. Either religious freedom undergirds the origin and existence of America or it does not. Religious freedom is either a universal right or it is not. Religious freedom is either a key to a stable and prosperous future or it is not.

If America is about allowing maximum religious freedoms, as my colleague the senior Senator from New York once said, then it should continue to do so.

It is time for this body to choose whether it will protect religious liberty or whether it will seek to destroy it.

In 1993, Congress stood up to defend the free exercise of religion after a Supreme Court decision undermined it. The bill before us today would undermine the free exercise of religion after a Supreme Court decision defended it.

In 1993, the free exercise of religion was offered as a solution. The bill before us today targets religious freedom as the problem. It treats certain religious beliefs as simply unworthy of recognition and religious exercise in general as a second- or even a third-rate value. I believe we can both uphold fundamental rights and find solutions to public policy issues.

I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, even though we have differences about policy, will once again join together for the common good by recommitting ourselves and our Nation to the fundamental right of religious freedom. We have to do this. It is the first freedom mentioned in the Bill of Rights. One would think everybody here would be absolutely on the side of upholding it.

This bill is anything but that, and I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle start to realize how important this is and vote against this terrible bill that has been slapped together for political purposes.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

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

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

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, Republicans are on the attack once again, trying to put women's fundamental rights on the chopping block. I stand with my colleagues to fight back. Senator PATTY MURRAY of Washington, Senator MARK UDALL of Colorado, and 40 other Senators have stood to sponsor new legislation to reverse the Supreme Court's shocking decision in Hobby Lobby, where the Court gave corporations the power to deny their employees access to birth control. We will vote on this legislation tomorrow morning, and I urge my colleagues to pass it without delay.

Right now, with millions of Americans still out of work and struggling to recover from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, with 40 million Americans dealing with student loans, with millions of people working full time at minimum wage and still living in poverty, with the big banks getting bigger, workers getting poorer, and seniors struggling to make ends meet, Republicans in Washington have decided that the most important thing for them to focus on is how to deny women access to birth control.

I will be honest: I cannot believe we are even having a debate about whether employers can deny women access to birth control. Guys, this is 2014, not 1914. Most Americans thought this was settled long, long ago. But for some reason Republicans keep dragging us back here over and over again.

After all, the Hobby Lobby case is just the most recent battle in an all-out Republican assault on women's access to basic health care. In 2012 the Republicans tried to pass the Blunt amendment, a proposal that would have allowed employers and insurance companies to deny women access to health care services based on any vague moral objection. Democrats said no, the President said no, and the American people said no to this offensive idea.

But instead of listening to the American people, Republicans in Washington doubled down. Remember last year's government shutdown that nearly tanked our economy? That fight started with a GOP effort to hold the whole operation of the Federal Government hostage in order to try to force Democrats and the President to let employers deny their workers access to birth control. Well, we rejected the hostage taking. Democrats said no, the President said no, and the American people said no to this offensive idea.

But instead of listening to the American people, Republicans turned to their rightwing friends on the Supreme Court, and those Justices did what Congress would not do, what the President would not do, and what the American people would not do. Those Justices decided that corporations have the right to ignore the law and determine for themselves whether their employees can access basic health care coverage.

The Hobby Lobby decision is a stunning case. As Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg noted in her dissent, the result of this case could be to deny ''legions of women who do not hold their employers' beliefs access to contraceptive coverage that the ACA would otherwise secure.''

The case is the first step on a slippery slope that could eventually allow corporations to deny health care coverage to employees for other medical care including immunizations that protect our children from deadly disease, HIV treatment that saves lives or blood transfusions needed in surgeries.

The Hobby Lobby case is stunning, but not entirely surprising. Giant corporations and their rightwing allies fight every day in Congress to protect their own privileges and to bend the laws to benefit themselves. They devote enormous resources to the task. Sometimes we beat them anyway. We beat them when they tried to pass the Blunt amendment, and we beat them when they tried to shut down the government over birth control. But when corporations lose in Congress, they don't just give up. They know they can often turn defeat into victory if they can get a favorable court decision. So while they push hard on Congress, they also devote enormous resources to influencing the courts, trying to transform our judiciary from a neutral, fair and impartial forum into just one more rigged Washington game. Nowhere has the success of this strategy to rig the courts been more obvious than with the U.S. Supreme Court. Three well-respected legal scholars recently examined 20,000 Supreme Court cases from the last 65 years, and they listed the top 10 most procorporate Justices in that entire time. The results? The five conservative Justices sitting on the Court today were all in the top 10, and Justices Alito and Roberts are numbers 1 and 2.

So it is no surprise that those five Justices banded together in the Hobby Lobby case to decide that corporations have more rights than the women who work for them. They decided that corporations are people who matter more than real living men and women who work hard everyday and who are entitled to the protection of our laws.

Now we can fight back against this decision and against the corporate capture of our Federal courts. We can fight back by appointing judges who are fair, judges who are impartial, judges who won't show up on any ''top 10'' list for putting a thumb on the scales in favor of big business. We can fight back tomorrow by passing legislation to overturn this terrible Supreme Court decision.

The proposed law, called the Protect Women's Health From Corporate Interference Act is simple. It does not require any person, any church, any house of worship, any faith or any religious nonprofit to endorse or provide insurance coverage for contraception. It does just one thing: It prevents ordinary for-profit corporations from ignoring the law and imposing their own religious beliefs on their employees by refusing to provide basic health benefits that are legally required. That was the law before Hobby Lobby, and it should be the law again.

Senators will have a chance to vote tomorrow, and I urge every Senator to do the right thing. But whatever happens, we have won this fight many times before, and I am confident that sooner or later we will win it again, because no matter how many resources the other side pours into this battle, they will never convince Americans that their bosses should be in charge of their most intimate health care decisions, and they will never convince Americans that corporations are people whose imagined rights are somehow more important than the health of real living, breathing people.

I have a daughter, I have granddaughters, and I will never stop fighting the efforts of backward-looking ideologues who want to cut women's access to birth control. We have lived in that world, and we are not going back—not ever.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, according to the Border Patrol, more than 57,000 unaccompanied children have entered the United States illegally this year. That number is expected to grow to 90,000 by the end of the year and 140,000 by the end of next year. These startling facts speak for themselves. Swift and dramatic action, both on the part of Congress and the administration is needed.

We know why most children are coming. America offers more opportunity than the country from which they are fleeing. Most of these children hope to be reunited with a parent or a relative. Many just hope to blend into the United States and to stay for an indefinite period of time. I understand that.

I understand the incentive to be in the United States, but we cannot simply allow this to continue. According to reports about a recent White House meeting the President had with some people concerned about this wave of people coming from Central America, the President said that sometimes there is an inherent injustice in where you are born, and no President can solve that. He reportedly said that Presidents must send the message that you just cannot show up at the border, plead for asylum or refugee status and hope to get it.

The President is quoted as saying:

> . . . then anyone can come in, and it means that, effectively, we don't have any kind of system. We are a Nation with borders that must be enforced.

The President is right. If the reckless journey from Central America or Mexico or any other country to the United States is met with, at worst, long stays in the United States and, at best, long stays coupled with family reunification, these crossings will continue. It is just human nature. Even if every child and every adult is ultimately deported 6 months or a year from now, it will be too late, for in the intervening months the message is: Make it to the United States and you can stay.

The incentives must change. When planes full of those who crossed are returned, people in those countries will stop paying smugglers thousands of dollars to take their children north. Incentives work, and in this case it may be the only way.

So what are we to do? At one point the President asked Congress for some legal authority. Congress should give it to him. In addition, Senator MCCAIN and I will offer a bill that will hinge U.S. foreign aid to Central American countries on their response to this situation, providing for refugee processing in those countries. They will heighten penalties for human trafficking and it will expedite the removal of those who are here without a legitimate claim.

The President did ask for funds to deal with the crisis, although he asked for those funds without reforms. I am pleased to say that there appears to be a growing consensus that any funding request in a supplemental bill should include substantive reforms that deal with the existing circumstances that we are in as well as heading off future impacts. In the meantime the administration has at its discretion the ability to dramatically stem this wave of crossings.

I will talk about a few of the options that the President clearly has right now. First and foremost, the Department of Homeland Security is not required to release unaccompanied children after they have been apprehended. While requiring DHS to transfer them to Health and Human Services within 72 hours, the 2008 trafficking law provides flexibility in ''exceptional circumstances.''

Second, the administration has at its discretion the ability to expedite or trim the timelines of hearings for unaccompanied children. For example, the President can direct the Department of Justice to not agree to continuances for these hearings. He should do that as well.

Third, for children already released to HHS, the President can direct HHS to not place children automatically with their parents or family members. The 2008 trafficking protection law requires the administration to place children in the ''least restrictive setting'' in their best interest. The administration has discretion as to what constitutes least restrictive setting. If we acknowledge, as the President has, that most of these children will not be able to stay in the United States, why would we place them with a parent or a guardian only to take them from that parent or guardian months or years later? That, I would submit, is not in their best interest.

I am certain that there are those who will object to these actions if taken by the President, but I will submit that we should do everything we can to ensure that another 30,000 or 60,000 or 100,000 children do not stream north on this dangerous journey. The real question is, What wouldn't we do to prevent that from happening? The current situation is not humane at all. It is not humane to allow these children to come forward this way.

Let me be clear. For those seeking asylum, there will be many who will have a legitimate claim of persecution. Nobody is talking about shutting down the avenues to submit or to have such a claim. There will still be protections for genuine asylum seekers. It is best for those who seek refuge to do so in their own home country at an American embassy or consulate. That should, at best, be done in their own country. The legislation we will put forward will provide more resources for that to happen.

Earlier this month the President's spokesman indicated that ''it's unlikely that most of the kids who go through this process will qualify for humanitarian relief, which is to say that most of them will not have a legal basis . . . to remain in the country.''

Cecilia Munoz, the Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council, made it clear: ''If you look at the history of these kinds of cases and apply them to the situation, it seems very unlikely that the majority of these children are going to have the ability to stay in the United States.''

Here is my primary concern: Despite discretion to do otherwise, the administration continues to provide precisely the goal of those crossing illegally—being allowed to enter the United States, reuniting with their families, and staying for an extended period of time. They are allowing these incentives to continue. Despite firm quotes and statements otherwise, the administration's response to the crisis is a case study in sending the wrong message.

In his July 8 request for $3.7 billion in supplemental spending related to this crisis, the President stated that his administration would work with Congress to ''ensure that [they] have the legal authority'' they need, including ''providing the Secretary of Homeland Security additional authority to exercise discretion in processing the return and removal of unaccompanied children from these Central American countries.'' More than a week later, with the wave of children crossing illegally every day and increased anger pointed at the issue, it remains anyone's guess as to what the President is actually seeking. He didn't ask for any new authority in the funding request that was just sent up. In the days after the supplemental request was made, it became clear that nearly $2 billion of the funding request is for the Department of Health and Human Services—a department that plays no role in deportation and a department that the administration permits to place those who cross illegally with families inside the United States.

Congress needs to do what it can to provide the statutory tools to address this crisis. As I mentioned earlier, the senior Senator from Arizona and I will offer a bill in the coming days to do that. In the meantime, the President has the discretion and the authority to act within the law, follow the law, and offer the right incentives so we don't have this situation continuing as it is today. I encourage the President to do so.

With that, I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The senior Senator from New Jersey.

IRAN NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I come again to the floor to speak about one of our greatest national security challenges, which is a nuclear-armed Iran and the latest conflicting remarks coming from Iran's leaders.

I will say at the outset, as I have said in the past, I support the administration's diplomatic efforts. I have always supported a bipartisan, two-track policy of diplomacy and sanctions. At the same time, I am convinced that we should only relieve pressure on Iran in exchange for very verifiable concessions that will fundamentally dismantle Iran's illicit nuclear program and that any deal be structured in such a way that alarm bells will sound from Vienna to Washington to Moscow and Beijing should Iran restart its program anytime in the next 20 or 30 years.

I am gravely concerned by the recent remarks of Iran's Supreme Leader, the Ayatollah, whose views about what Iran is willing to give up in a deal seem to deliberately undermine the positions of Iran's negotiators in Vienna and clearly curtail their flexibility as we enter into a critical stage of the talks.

Yesterday, Foreign Minister Zarif gave an interview that went public with Iran's negotiating position. Let's break down exactly what it is he offered. He said Iran will freeze its nuclear fuel program for several years in exchange for being treated like other peaceful nuclear nations and for sanctions relief. Let's be clear. This will leave 19,000 centrifuges spinning in Iran. It would not, from what I can tell, require Iran to dismantle anything. In my view, that is not a starting place for an end game. It is the same obfuscation and the same Iranian tactics we have seen for years and decades. Iran puts offers on the table that appear to be concessions but in reality are designed to preserve Iranian illicit nuclear infrastructure and enrichment so that the capacity to break out and rush toward a nuclear weapon is still very much within reach. That is not an end game; it is a nonstarter.

Essentially what Zarif is offering is the same concessions as what Iran made for the interim agreement over 6 months ago. In exchange, Iran gets sanction relief—except we know Iran is not like any other nation, and its history of cheating, lying, and evading inspections proves it.

One commentator said this morning: ''So it seems that Iran is trying to protect its nuclear breakout capacity while trying to appear moderate.''

Zarif's proposal last night is nothing more than smoke and mirrors. It is more moderate than the Ayatollah's outlandish demand for 190,000 centrifuges last week, but at its core it is an offer to not give anything in terms of enrichment capacity and in exchange receive sanctions relief, and that is unacceptable.

The Zarif proposal will extend the joint plan of action, allowing Iran's nuclear program to run in place subject to inspections but will not make a single concession—none—that would demonstrably set back Iran's nuclear ambitions in the long term, including no concessions on the number of centrifuges in the secret Fordow enrichment facility. Iran would get the relief it wants while retaining the infrastructure to quickly rebuild its stockpile of highly enriched uranium. That is straight out of the North Korea handbook—freeze and preserve your ability for a future date.

I remind my colleagues in the Senate that in October of 1994, the United States and North Korea signed an agreed framework which the international community hoped would end the ongoing crisis over North Korea's nuclear program. The agreement froze the operation and construction of North Korea's nuclear reactors which were part of its covert nuclear weapons program. In exchange, the United States agreed to provide two proliferation-resistant nuclear power reactors. There were high hopes for the agreement. Many called it a first step in the full normalization of political and economic relations with North Korea.

While North Korea carried out some of the measures in the agreement, it simultaneously continued its ballistic missile program by improving the range and accuracy of its missiles, and it secretly began to pursue a clandestine program to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons separate from the plutonium program which the agreement had frozen.

Once again, international tensions came to a head in January of 2003 when North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and following its withdrawal from the NPT, North Korea kicked out IAEA inspectors, restarted the nuclear reactor that had been frozen under the 1994 agreed framework, and began moving spent fuel rods to a reprocessing center that could produce plutonium.

At the time of its withdrawal, North Korea, like Iran, said it ''had no intention of making nuclear weapons'' and that its nuclear activities ''would be confined only to power production and other peaceful purposes.'' Of course, as

we know now, North Korea would conduct a nuclear test establishing its potential to build nuclear weapons.

This history should serve as a warning about what could happen if we allow Iran to maintain a robust nuclear infrastructure.

The fact is that Iran is simply agreeing to freeze and to temporarily lock the door on its nuclear weapons program as is and walk away. Should they later walk away from the deal, as they have in the past, they can simply unlock the door and continue their nuclear weapons program from where they are today. That is exactly what the talks—in my mind—were intended to avoid.

As I stand here, there is a rush for our negotiators in Vienna and Secretary Kerry to go and try to save the essence of what seems to be a significant distance between the parties. I know our side is working in good faith to reach an agreement. Our terms have been on the table for months, and now, at the critical hour, the Supreme Leader throws a monkey wrench into the negotiations and even surprises his own negotiating team by demanding that 190,000 centrifuges remain for any final deal.

At this point it is our obligation to ask some very pointed questions. Are Zarif and President Ruhani truly empowered to make this deal? Even though Zarif and Ruhani's intentions seem sincere, can we say the same about the ultimate decisionmaker in Tehran, Supreme Leader Khamenei? Does the Supreme Leader truly want a deal or are his redlines an attempt to undermine the negotiations?

Secretary Kerry said this morning that ''the U.S. believes Iran has the right to a peaceful nuclear program under the NPT.''

Let's remind ourselves of first principles. No country has a right to enrichment. They may have the ability to enrichment or a desire to enrich, but they do not have the right to enrich, and certainly not Iran given its past behavior.

Let's remember how we reached this point. Over a period of decades, Iran has deceived the international community about its nuclear program, breaching its international commitment in what everyone agrees was an attempt to make Iran a nuclear weapons state or at least a threshold state. Experts such as those at the Institute for Science and International Security believe that Iran began building a secret uranium enrichment centrifuge facility underground at Fordow in 2006—3 years—3 years—before it was declared to the International Atomic Energy Administration. Now Iran is seeking to turn the tables on the negotiation to again convince the international community—through words rather than deeds—that it seeks a peaceful nuclear energy program. The Supreme Leader called the idea of closing Fordow ''laughable.'' For my colleagues, this is a facility built under a mountain, declared only after Iran was caught cheating, and designed to withstand a military strike. It does not take a nuclear expert to draw the obvious conclusion about Iran's intentions.

If Iran can't even agree to close the facility that is at the heart of its covert enrichment program, what concessions can it possibly make that would address international concerns? Are we supposed to take Iran at its word when its actions have demonstrated over years that it is not a good-faith actor? Are we supposed to believe that Iran wants 190,000 centrifuges—about 171,000 more than it has right now—for peaceful purposes? That is truly laughable.

Even for a country that doesn't have the world's third largest oil reserves—which Iran does—that would be an absurd position. Iran can—and in fact already does—get cheaper and better nuclear fuel for the Bushehr reactor from Russia than it could make at home. Let me repeat that. It gets cheaper and better fuel from Russia for its nuclear reactor at the Bushehr facility than what it can make at home.

Experts agree that centrifuges must be a part of the deal. David Albright, a respected former International Atomic Energy Administration inspector, has said for Iran's move from an interim to a final agreement, it would have to close the Fordow facility and remove between 15,000 and 16,000 of its existing 20,000 centrifuges. Even then, we are looking at a breakout time of about 6 to 8 months, depending on whether Iran has access to uranium enriched to just 3.5 percent or access to 20-percent enriched uranium.

Dennis Ross, one of America's preeminent diplomats and foreign policy analysts, who has served under both Democratic and Republican Presidents, has said Iran should retain no more than 10 percent of its centrifuges. That is no more than 2,000.

So maybe the comments we have heard from the Supreme Leader were, as some analysts have suggested, an effort by the Supreme Leader to superimpose limitations on the negotiating team so at some point they would be free to say these issues are out of their hands, in the hope of somehow forcing a better deal this week in Vienna. So I suggest that we are either seeing a not so clever game of good cop-bad cop or Iran's negotiators in Vienna have done a poor job of communicating what their boss believes is the bottom line at the negotiating table or maybe we just haven't been listening to what we don't want to hear. From the onset of the talks, Iran's Foreign Minister Zarif and President Rouhani have said they would not dismantle any centrifuges. President Rouhani was adamant in an interview on CNN that Iran would not be dismantling its centrifuges.

Let me quote from that interview with Mr. Zakaria.

President Rouhani:

> We are determined to provide for the nuclear fuel of such plants inside the country, at the hands of local Iranian scientists. We are going to follow on this path.

Zakaria said:

> So there will be no destruction of centrifuges, of existing centrifuges?

President Rouhani said:

> No, no, not at all.

Let's remember that the onus in these talks is on Iran, not the P5+1. Iran is the party at fault. Iran is the party that came to these talks with unclean hands. Iran is the party that has been consistently and overwhelmingly rebuffed by the United Nations and the international community for its nuclear ambitions and support for terrorism, the subject of six U.N. Security Council resolutions and a multitude of sanctions regimes.

Just last week the U.S. courts agreed to a landmark payment of $1.7 billion to the families of Iranian terror victims, including families of the 241 servicemembers who died in the bombing of the Marine Corps barracks bombing in Lebanon in 1983—31 years ago—and 19 who died in the Khobar Towers bombing in eastern Saudi Arabia in 1996—both bombings perpetrated by Iran. Iran's duplicity has been going on for decades.

So who is the bad guy here? Now commentators may choose to see the U.S. Congress as the antagonist here, but I suggest they look across the table and decide whether they want to take a deal with Iran on a nod and a handshake. In my view, through its history, through its actions, through its false words and deeds for decades, Iran has forgone the ability for us to shake on a deal that freezes their program. The only option on the table can be a long-term deal that dismantles Iran's illicit nuclear weapons program—a deal that clearly provides for a long-term verification, inspection, and enforcement regime, and incentives for compliance in the form of sanctions relief—based on Iranian actions that are verifiable, not on what Iran claims to be the truth.

The fact is, from my perspective, there is no sanctions relief signing bonus. If Iran wants relief from sanctions, then it needs to tangibly demonstrate to the world it is giving up its quest for nuclear weapons—period.

Let's remember that, although none of us in this Chamber are at the negotiating table, we have a tremendous stake in the outcome. Without Congress's bipartisan action on a clear sanctions regime, there would have been no talks and we would not even have had the hope of ending Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions. As a separate and coequal branch of government representing the American people, Congress has an obligation to provide oversight and a duty to express our views of what a comprehensive deal should look like. I will continue to come to this floor to express my views and my concerns given what we have heard and seen in the past from Iran.

Iran has a history of duplicity with respect to its nuclear program, using past negotiations to cover advances in its nuclear program. And let's not forget that President Rouhani, as the

former negotiator for Iran, said, in no uncertain terms:

> The day that we invited the three European ministers to the talks, only 10 centrifuges were spinning at Natanz. We could not produce one gram of U4 or U6. We did not have the heavy water production. We could not produce yellowcake. Our total production of centrifuges inside the country was 150. We wanted to complete all of these. We needed time. We did not stop. We completed the program.

That is his quote.

The simple truth is he admitted to deceiving the West.

Everyone knows my history on this issue. Everyone knows where I stand. It is the same place I have always stood. For 20 years I have worked on Iran's nuclear issues, starting when I was a junior Member of the House, pressing for sanctions to prevent Iran from building the Bushehr nuclear powerplant and to halt IAEA support for Iranian mining and enrichment programs. For a decade I was told that my concern had no basis, that Iran would never be able to bring the Bushehr plant on line, and that Iran's activities were not a concern.

Well, history has shown those assessments about Iran's abilities and intentions were simply wrong. The fact is Iran's nuclear aspirations have been a long and deliberate process. They did not materialize overnight, and they will not end simply with a good word and a handshake. We need verification.

If Iran's nuclear weapons capability is frozen rather than largely dismantled, they will remain at the threshold of becoming a declared nuclear State should they choose to start again, because nothing will have changed if nothing is dismantled.

Make no mistake. Iran views developing a nuclear capability as fundamental to its existence. It has seen the development of nuclear weapons as part of a regional hegemonic strategy to make Tehran the center of power throughout the region. That is why our allies and partners in the region—not just Israelis, but the Emiratis and the Saudis—are so skeptical and so concerned about having a leak-proof deal. Quite simply, our allies and partners do not trust Iranian leaders, nor do they believe that Iran has any intention of verifiably ending its nuclear weapons program.

So while I welcome diplomatic efforts as what we have worked toward and I share the hope that the administration can achieve a final comprehensive agreement that eliminates this threat to global peace and security, for the U.S. Congress to support the relief that Iran is looking for, we will need a deal that doesn't just freeze Iran's nuclear weapons program, but a deal—demonstrated through verifiable action by Iran over years—that in fact turns back the clock and makes the world a safer place.

Let me say the fact is there are those who have created a false narrative over the last 6 months that now seems to be self-perpetuating, that anyone who expresses an opinion different than the desire to have a deal—almost a deal at any cost—is a warmonger. For those who now say, Well, if we don't have a deal, then what? I would remind them of what the administration has said time and time again: No deal is better than a bad deal. I agree with that sentiment. But I am concerned that there are forces that would accept a deal even if it is a bad deal. This doesn't serve the interests of the negotiators at the table in Vienna, and it doesn't serve the interests of the American people who want to ensure that Iran doesn't get a nuclear weapon, and that any deal permanently eliminates the possibility that Iran could develop a nuclear weapon that threatens the international order. One mistake is all it takes.

At the end of the day, keeping the pressure on Iran to completely satisfy the United Nations and the international community's demands to halt and reverse its illicit nuclear activities is the best way to avoid war in the first place.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I wish to commend the senior Senator from New Jersey for the powerful remarks he has just given about the threat posed both to the United States and to the world of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons capabilities. I wish to commend the Senator from New Jersey for his leadership, along with Senator MARK KIRK, on Iran sanctions legislation—legislation that enjoys wide bipartisan support—and indeed that would have passed into law months ago were it not for the majority leader of this Chamber refusing to allow a vote on it. Even to this day, we should vote on Kirk-Menendez, because a substantial majority of Members of this body and of the House of Representatives would pass this legislation to make clear what the senior Senator from New Jersey just made clear: that no deal is not nearly as bad as a bad deal, which all of us fear we are on the verge of entering into in Vienna.

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

I rise today to address the misguided foreign policy of the Obama administration, which is wreaking catastrophic consequences across the globe. The Obama-Clinton-Kerry foreign policy has profoundly undermined our national security, along with that of our friend and ally, the Nation of Israel.

Just last week the White House coordinator for the Middle East, Phillip Gordon, gave an astonishing speech at an international conference from Tel Aviv to try yet again to revive the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. In his remarks, Mr. Gordon criticized Israel for the failure of the most recent round of attacks, urging yet further concessions to the Palestinians. He asserted that the United States, as Israel's ''greatest defender and closest friend,'' had the obligation to ask ''fundamental questions'' about Israel's very viability as a democratic Jewish State after the breakdown of negotiations.

I am not sure about the role Mr. Gordon suggests friends should play, but undermining our allies is not one of them.

Mr. Gordon threatened that America would not be able to prevent the international isolation of Israel—what Secretary of State John Kerry shockingly recently referred to as Israel becoming an ''apartheid'' state—if Israel did not return to the table on terms he found acceptable.

Mr. Gordon warned that the clock is ticking and that Israel should not take for granted the Palestinian Authority's willingness to negotiate. He claimed that the administration's negotiations with Iran had halted that country's nuclear program and made Israel safer.

Mr. Gordon's comments are belied by the facts given that, No. 1, this conference took place under the direct threat of rocket attack from the Palestinian-sanctioned terrorist group Hamas—indeed, delegates literally had to, at one point, scatter for shelter—given that, No. 2, these rockets were fired by the very same terrorist actors who abducted and then brutally murdered three Jewish boys 3 weeks ago near Hebron, and given that, No. 3, Hamas spokesman Osama Hamdan announced just days later that it was working closely with Iran in its attacks on Israel, declaring Hamas's ''connection with Hezbollah and Iran is much stronger today than what people tend to think.''

Given these facts, Mr. Gordon's remarks seem utterly detached from reality.

Even more disturbing, the speech did not take place in a vacuum but, rather, was part of a coordinated messaging effort. It was accompanied by an op-ed by President Obama in Ha'aretz, which sponsored the conference, repeating Mr. Gordon's main themes. Taken as a whole, these statements demonstrate that the administration's longstanding policy of pressuring Israel into a peace deal with the Palestinians remains unchanged by the harsh reality in which Israel finds herself.

In the hopes of demonstrating that there are some in the U.S. Government who do not share this policy, I would like to offer an alternative approach.

As Israel's greatest partner and ally, the United States has weathered with Israel relentless attacks from terrorist organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah, belligerents from rogue nations like Iran, and unremitting hostility from international organizations like the United Nations.

As such, we are veritable brothers in arms—and who better than a brother to tell the truth about you?

The truth is that Israel is the one country in the Middle East that fully shares America's fundamental values and interests.

The truth is that Israel is a vibrant, inclusive democracy that respects the

rights of its citizens—Jewish and Arab alike.

The truth is that Israel has for more than six decades wanted nothing more than peace and has repeatedly made significant concessions to achieve it.

The truth is that Israel can never be isolated on the international stage because the United States, with or without the President, will continue to stand with Israel.

And the truth is that for the United States to abandon Israel would be to abandon the very moral principles that have made our Nation exceptional.

These basic truths should inform any discussion of the current conflict taking place between Israel and the Palestinians.

We also need to recognize that the circumstances leading to the 2012 cease-fire between Hamas and Israel are not the circumstances in which we find ourselves today, and that the terms of that agreement have proven inadequate to the current reality. Both Israel and the United States had hoped that the relative calm following the 2012 cease-fire would lead to peace and that the increasing prosperity of the West Bank would lead the Palestinians to renounce war. Sadly, those hopes proved illusory. That cease-fire did not change the fact that the Palestinians have remained implacably hostile and, indeed, their government is actively indoctrinating yet another generation in vicious genocidal hatred toward Israel and the West.

That simmering hatred burst into flame last month when three innocent teenagers—Naftali Fraenkel, Gilad Shaar, and Eyal Yifrah—were kidnapped and murdered by Hamas agents. In a stark reminder of how intertwined our nations are, Naftali was a duel Israel-American citizen. This was a vicious attack against innocent Jews, regardless of their nationality, and Americans as well as Israelis were considered legitimate targets.

There is a temptation to refer to the murder of three teenagers as a senseless tragedy that should be handled by law enforcement. But this attack was nothing of the sort. It was a terrorist atrocity coldly plotted and executed by vicious killers whose only motivation was to murder teenage Jews regardless of their citizenship, and whose larger mission is the annihilation first of Israel and then of the United States.

It was therefore my privilege last week to file S. 2577, a bill that would direct the Secretary of State to offer a reward of up to $5 million for the capture or killing of Naftali's killers—and by extension those of Gilad and Eyal as well.

No one doubts Israel's ability to handle this matter on her own, but the Hamas terrorists need to be perfectly clear that the United States understands that kidnapping and murdering a U.S. citizen is an attack on us as well and we will actively support Israel's response to this atrocity.

I am gratified by the support this bill has gotten in the Senate from both sides of the aisle and, in particular, I am gratified that this bill is cosponsored by the senior Senator from New Jersey, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and I look forward to that committee's markup of the bill this week and then, hopefully, to its passage through both Houses of Congress. There is also a bipartisan version of this bill in the House of Representatives led by Representative DOUG LAMBORN of Colorado and Representative BRAD SHERMAN of California.

Following the discovery of the murdered teens, the Israeli Government has moved decisively against Hamas in a just and appropriate action to both bring the terrorists responsible to justice and to degrade Hamas's capability to launch further attacks.

Now is not the moment to suggest that Israel open itself to further terrorist attack by, for example, withdrawing from the West Bank.

Now is not the moment to urge restraint or to try to broker yet another temporary cease-fire that does not stop the threat of Hamas murdering innocent civilians. Now is the moment to support Israel in the effort to eliminate the intolerable threat of Hamas, and given Hamas's commitment to terrorist violence, the Israeli response is by necessity military and it must be decisive.

This conflict is not of Israel's choice; it is Hamas's choice, and to argue that there is some sort of viable diplomatic alternative, as Mr. Gordon and President Obama did last week, is denying the truth.

In addition to the current military offensive, there are a number of important long-term steps that the Government of Israel has taken to reduce the threat of terrorist attacks and so to secure the civilian population. One is the security barrier in the West Bank initiated by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon during the second intifada. Necessitated by waves of Palestinian suicide bombers targeting Israel, this fence was immediately decried as an abuse of the Palestinian people and, indeed, declared illegal by the International Court of Justice. But since the fencing began, attacks have declined by 90 percent—90 percent. No apology should be required for securing a nation's border and for saving innocent civilian lives.

The Israeli missile defense system that protects against short-range rockets coming out of Gaza is an equally remarkable success story. In partnership with the United States, Israel has conceived, designed, and implemented Iron Dome, which enjoyed a remarkable 87 percent success rate during the 2012 operation Pillar of Defense and to all appearances is exceeding that performance in this most recent action. Iron Dome has dramatically changed Israel's ability to determine the future on its own terms, not because the Palestinians have in any way modified their eagerness to fire rockets at their neighbors in an attempt to murder innocent civilians but, rather, because the Israelis now have a system capable of neutralizing the vast majority of those rockets and protecting the hospitals and schools and homes that the Palestinians seek to destroy.

President Obama wrote in his Ha'aretz op-ed that ''[w]hile walls and missile defense systems can help protect against some threats, true safety will only come with a comprehensive negotiated settlement.'' But that can only be true when both sides genuinely seek peaceful coexistence, which at this time, sadly, the Palestinians do not. Projects like the security barrier and Iron Dome may well be, both practically and philosophically, Israel's only real option. That the Israel response to hostility out of the territories has been primarily defensive is an important illustration of their preferred approach to this problem, which is not to attack or destroy but, rather, to protect and defend.

This posture illustrates the fundamental difference between the Israelis, who have pledged they will stop fighting when the Palestinians stop fighting, and the Palestinians who swear they will stop fighting only when Israel ceases to exist. As Prime Minister Netanyahu recently said: Israel uses missiles to protect its citizens; whereas Hamas uses its citizens to protect its missiles.

We must reject any assertion of moral equivalence between the Palestinians who seek to attack Israel and the Israelis who are trying to defend themselves from terrorist attack.

Nowhere was the contrast between these two sides more clear than in the two investigations that are taking place into the murders that occurred in Israel in recent weeks. After the bodies of Naftali, Gilad, and Eyal were discovered, an Arab teen, Mohammed Abu Khdeir, was tragically, savagely murdered by Jewish extremists in a perverted attempt at retribution. Prime Minister Netanyahu rightly, quickly, and emphatically condemned this act and he called the victim's father personally to offer condolences. Naftali's mother Rachael stated her sympathy publicly saying:

> No mother or father [should] go through what we are going through now. We share the pain of the parents of Muhammad Abu Khdeir. . . . Even in the depth of the mourning over our son, it is hard for me to describe how distressed we were over the outrage that happened in Jerusalem—the shedding of innocent blood is against morality, it is against the Torah and Judaism, it is against the basis of our life in this country. The murderers of our children, who ever sent them, who ever helped them and who ever incited toward that murder—will all be brought to justice, but it will be them, and no innocent people, it will be done [by] the government, the police, the justice department and not by vigilantes.

Contrast Racheal Fraenkel's powerful statement with that of the mother of one of the Hamas suspects in Naftali's abduction and murder, who while the boys were still missing and before their executed bodies had been

discovered, publicly announced: ''They're throwing the guilt on him by accusing him of kidnapping. If he truly did it—I'll be proud of him until my final day . . . If he did the kidnapping, I'll be proud of him. I raised my children on the knees of the religion, they are religious guys, honest and clean-handed, and their goal is to bring the victory of Islam.''

Contrast those two statements. One is serious law enforcement responding to the wrongful murder of a teenager. The other is a society that celebrates, that glorifies, that lionizes vicious criminals who kidnap and murder innocent teenagers. Further highlighting the contrast is the fact that the murderers of Mohammed Abu Khdeir were apprehended in less than a week. The Israeli police moved and moved expeditiously.

Almost a month after the abduction of Naftali, Gilad and Eyal, their Hamas murderers are still at large because they are being protected by those who consider them heroes rather than terrorists. When Mr. Gordon asserted in his speech that Israel's ''military control of another people,'' for ''recurring instability,'' and for ''embolden[ing] extremists'' were to blame for the regions problems, he ignored the facts that the Palestinian Authority bears the real responsibility for the crisis by including Hamas in their so-called ''unity government,'' and then urging the international community to officially sanction this deal with the devil.

This should not be surprising as the PA is headed by Mahmoud Abbas, a Holocaust denier who was Yasser Arafat's right-hand man for 3 decades. Ever since Arafat and Abbas were given autonomy to run the Palestinian territories 20 years ago through the Oslo Accords, they have used that power to radicalize their population and to harden opposition to the very idea of peaceful existence with the Jewish State of Israel.

Palestinian children are bombarded with heavy-handed propaganda praising the virtues of suicide bombers and other mass murderers. Sesame Street-style puppets and cartoon characters are horrifically used to encourage children to grow up to become terrorists. Yet President Obama hails President Abbas as a man who can help broker a peace deal. Phillip Gordon called him in his speech last week a ''reliable partner'' for peace. Holocaust deniers are not reliable partners. Leaders who incite hatred and bigotry and the murder of innocent children are not reliable partners.

Just 2 months ago I was back in the nation of Israel. I traveled to the north of Israel, to the Ziv hospital, a hospital in the north of Israel that has treated over 1,000 Syrians wounded in the horrific civil war waging in that country. I met with those Israeli physicians and nurses as they described how they have given over $8 million in free medical care, uncompensated.

One person in particular I spoke with there was a social worker who described the shock and trauma of young children. Imagine, you are a little boy, you are a little girl in Syria. You go to bed in your bedroom. A bomb, a missile, a mortar comes through the ceiling and explodes. When you awake, you have been horrifically wounded. You find yourself in the nation of Israel in a hospital surrounded by Israeli doctors and nurses.

What this social worker told us was that as horrifying as being the victim of terrorism, as horrifying as some of these little boys or girls discovering limbs of their body had been blown off, that consistently the greatest terror of these children was finding themselves in Israel because their entire time they had been told that Israel was the devil. This social worker who is fluent in Arabic would spend time talking and reassuring these children and comforting them, because they were sure horrible things would happen to them.

Why were they sure of this? Because they had been taught those lies from the moment they could learn. One Israeli physician described to me a comment that a Syrian woman made to her. She said: My entire life the Army that I had been told was there to protect me—now they are trying to kill me. My entire life the Army I had been told wanted to kill me—now they are the only people protecting me and my family.

We will not see peace between Israel and the Palestinians until the Palestinian Government stops incitement, stops systematically training its children to hate and to kill. Neither Hamas nor its partner, the Palestinian Authority, has displayed any interest in peace. The so-called Hamas-affiliated technocrats that Abbas has embraced have done nothing to curb Hamas's violence, as missiles continue to rain down on innocent civilians in Israel or even to express sympathy for the murdered Jewish teenagers. Even that is a bridge too far given the hatred that the Palestinian Government promotes.

The incessant campaign of incitement carried but out by the PA lays bear the myth that Abbas is in any way a moderate or possesses any real desire for peace with the Jewish state. In his speech, Mr. Gordon asserted that ''Israel should not take for granted the opportunity to negotiate peace with President Abbas, who has shown time and again that he is committed to nonviolence and coexistence with Israel.'' How can any rational sentient person utter that sentence—that Mr. Abbas has shown time and again that he is committed to nonviolence and coexistence with Israel, while he partners with Hamas, a terrorist organization that is raining rockets on Israel as we speak, when he is directly responsible for a pattern of incitement that is training young Palestinians in vicious, racial bigotry and hatred, that is celebrating murderers and kidnappers as heroes and martyrs?

Anyone who utters a statement like Mr. Gordon uttered is being willfully blind to the facts on the ground. Given that it was Mr. Abbas, not Israel, who accepted Hamas into the PA's Government, the burden should be on the PA, not Israel, to unequivocally condemn not only Hamas but also their fellow terrorist groups, the Islamic Jihad and Abbas' own Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade.

The PA should not take for granted the limitless patience, not only of Israel but also the United States, and, indeed, any responsible members of the civilized world for the legitimization of these terrorist groups.

While the PA harbors Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade or any other terrorist group and supports their vicious activity, it should forfeit its position as a legitimate negotiating partner with Israel. It is the height of delusion to suggest that Israel should accommodate the Palestinian Authority with any further security concessions until this activity stops.

While the PA harbors Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade or any other terrorist groups, and supports their vicious activity, it should forfeit any and all material support from the taxpayers of the United States—not one penny. Only when the PA takes significant and affirmative steps to stop the incitement, eradicate terrorism, and demonstrate its leadership ability to honor their pledged commitments in the past, including the Oslo Accords, and affirms Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state should this aid be reconsidered.

It must also be recognized that Hamas is not acting alone in the current crisis. In an alarming escalation of the rocket attacks out of Gaza, Hamas militants recently fired an M–302 type rocket an unprecedented 70 miles north, some 30 miles north of Tel Aviv, meaning that now 6 million Israelis are vulnerable to the rocket attacks.

Israel has intercepted a shipment of these weapons bound for Gaza from Iran earlier this year. It now appears that some of them have gotten through by other means. As Osama Hamdan's celebrating their close collaboration demonstrates, neither Hamas nor Iran is even trying to hide the connection. In the face of this blatant hostility from the Islamic Republic of Iran, it seems the height of foolishness for the United States to be participating in nuclear negotiations with Tehran at this time. Iran's leaders are actively engaged in inciting and supplying violent terrorists. Indeed, Iran is the chief state sponsor of terrorism on the globe today.

Our focus should be on thwarting Iran's behavior in Gaza and across the world, not in engaging in diplomatic niceties over Chardonnay in Vienna. Given Iran's ongoing pattern of arming Hamas with increasingly sophisticated weapons, it is simply unacceptable to risk their achieving nuclear capability by exploiting the eagerness—the utterly unexplainable eagerness—of the Obama administration to get a deal—

any deal—any deal at all it seems—by the July 20, 2014, deadline.

We need to recognize that the arbitrary decision to relax sanctions and to engage in 6 months of negotiations under the joint plan of action last year was a historic mistake. We need to dramatically reverse course, and we should immediately reimpose sanctions until Iran makes fundamental concessions by ceasing all uranium enrichment, handing over its stockpiles of enriched uranium, and destroying its 19,000 centrifuges.

The Obama, Clinton, Kerry foreign policy is setting the stage for Iran to acquire nuclear weapon capability. If Iran acquires that capability, it will pose a grave if not mortal threat to the nation of Israel and to the United States. The strategy of the Obama administration—relaxing sanctions first and then hoping to get some concessions later—is putting the proverbial cart before the horse.

You do not negotiate with bullies and tyrants by conceding everything at the outset and then hoping for good faith. Instead, we should reimpose those sanctions and additionally, as a further condition, we should demand that Iran stop its state sponsorship of terrorist attacks against our allies. Only then should Iran see a relaxation of sanctions.

In the coming days, I will be filing legislation which will do exactly that: reimpose strong sanctions on Iran immediately, strengthen those sanctions, include an enforcement mechanism to ensure that these measures are implemented, and call for the dismantling of Iran's nuclear program, which should be the only path to relaxing sanctions in the future.

This legislation will lay out a clear path that Iran can follow to evade the sanctions: Simply behave in good faith and stop its relentless march towards acquiring nuclear weapons capability.

The connection between Hamas and Iran is a sobering reminder of a larger context in which the events of the past month have taken place. They are not an isolated local issue that could be managed if only Israel would act with restraint. Both the United States and Israel want the Palestinian people to have a secure and prosperous future free from the corrosive hatred that has so far prevented them from thriving. But as has been demonstrated time and time again, the simple truth is that concessions from Israel are not going to alleviate that hatred. The truth is that aid from the United States is not going to alleviate that hatred. The truth is that even the establishment of a Palestinian State would not alleviate that hatred while the avowed policy of the Palestinian Government is the destruction of Israel.

Only when the Palestinians take it upon themselves to embrace their neighbors and to eradicate terrorist violence from their society can a real and just peace be possible. Until then, there should be no question of the firm solidarity of the United States with Israel in the mutual defense of our fundamental values and interests. This is nothing less than the defense of our very exceptionalism as a nation—that same exceptionalism fueled by those God-given rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to which Israel aspires.

Writing in the New York Times last September, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned that it is ''extremely dangerous to encourage people to see themselves as exceptional.''

In a very odd echo of President Putin's sentiment, Secretary Kerry said just today, in Vienna, that hearing politicians talk about American exceptionalism makes him quite uptight because it is ''in-your-face'' and so might offend other nations. Secretary Kerry should know, as President Putin clearly fears, it is indeed discomforting for bullies and tyrants such as Hamas and their Iranian sponsors to see free people boldly assert their exceptionalism. Indeed, in modern history it has been dangerous for totalitarian despots when the American people rise and defend our exceptionalism.

I would encourage Secretary Kerry to unambiguously explain American exceptionalism to his colleagues across the negotiating table. They might benefit from hearing that one of the most exceptional things about America is that we will robustly support our allies when they are engaged with the radical terrorist enemy that targets us both.

It is not enough, as Mr. Gordon seems to think sufficient, to ''fight for it [Israel] every day in the United Nations.'' We shouldn't just ''have Israel's back.'' We should be proud to stand beside Israel, to make sure that both Hamas and Iran know that the United States is ready to provide whatever moral support or military resupply Israel might need.

It is true we might risk a little of the criticism from the international community that seems to be of such concern to Mr. Gordon and to President Obama, but the United Nations should be the least of our worries at this point.

In any event, threats of Israel finding herself isolated—threats sadly emanating, in part, from the administration of this government—appear empty, as many of our closest friends, including Canada, Great Britain, France, and Germany, have spoken out in the strongest of terms supporting Israel's right to self-defense.

I add my voice to theirs and urge President Obama to reconsider the counterproductive policies laid out by Mr. Gordon last week. The White House should explicitly disavow Mr. Gordon's misguided speech, haranguing, and attacking our friend and ally in the nation of Israel.

A negotiated settlement is not an absolute prerequisite to Israel's security, as the administration has claimed but, rather, establishing Israel's security may be the only way to eventually reach any such settlement. Israel's fight against radical Islamic terrorism and by extension the radical Iranian regime that supports it is our fight as well.

There is a reason they call Israel the little Satan and America the great Satan. This menace does not discriminate between Israelis and Americans, and it cannot be placated or appeased even by the deftist diplomacy. It must be diligently defended against and at times, when necessary, it must be directly confronted.

This is difficult, dangerous work that Israel's Government and the brave men and women who serve in its Armed Forces are doing right now for the sake of both nations. I hope and I pray for their continuing success as America stands, unashamedly, alongside the nation of Israel.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. I rise to describe my concerns with the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling of the Hobby Lobby case and also to describe my support for the Murray-Udall legislation which I am cosponsoring and which we will act on later this week.

First, just a word about one item in the case that is not my main concern but is worthy of a passing comment; that is, whether a corporation can have religious rights.

Of course, individuals can have religious rights. Churches can have religious rights. Religiously affiliated organizations have religious rights. That has been recognized often. But do corporations have religious rights?

I would argue that the Supreme Court's decision in Hobby Lobby that they do is sort of fundamentally at odds with what notion a corporation is. Corporations exist for many reasons, but fundamentally the core of a corporation is the creation of a fictional entity that is supposed to stand apart from the individual owners. That fictional entity has rights and responsibilities that are different than the rights and responsibilities of the owners. In fact, we create the corporate forum to protect the individual owners. The individual owners, once a corporate forum is created, as you know, are generally protected against legal liability. A corporation's actions, if they are illegal, can only be held against the corporation and except in very rare instances the individuals who own the corporation are free from the liability that might flow from a corporation's acts.

So the basic question is, if individuals decide to form a corporation to distance themselves and to protect themselves from liability for a cooperation's acts, how can they also presume to exercise their religious viewpoints—their personal, intimate, religious viewpoints—through the very form of the corporation? It is allowing the owners to have it both ways—complete protection from legal liability

but continued ability to exercise their personal and intimate religious viewpoints through the corporate forum.

I think the notion of corporate religious freedom is almost an oxymoron. The statute at question in the Supreme Court case, the RFRA statute, refers to the sincerely held religious beliefs of a person.

What are the sincerely held religious beliefs of a person of the corporation under the corporate charter that would be granted by the States? In order to determine that, should we inquire in this instance, for example, whether the families of the owners ever use contraception? If in fact they did, would that undermine a claim that they have a sincerely held religious belief against contraception?

What if it could be shown that the owners invested in stocks in companies that produced contraception, would that undermine the claim that a corporation has a sincerely held religious belief against contraception? I don't know the answers to these questions, but I think the mere raising of the questions demonstrates again that the notion of a corporation exercising religious beliefs is highly suspect.

But I don't think the Hobby Lobby case was about religious freedom. I read the opinion. I practiced law, including constitutional law for 17 years. I have read the opinion. I don't think this is a case about religious freedom.

I think the opinion in the Hobby Lobby case is, instead, part of an anticontraception movement where the political goal is not just to encourage women or families to not use contraception but instead it is geared toward the reduction of social access to contraception for all.

This isn't a case about religious freedom. It is a case that is very focused on attempts to reduce access to contraception throughout American society.

The Court does something in the opinion that is fascinating. There is a phrase—I am not a poker player, but there is a phrase that if you play a lot of poker, a poker player should watch for their tell. If they reveal by knocking on the table or something that, oh, well, they are bluffing now, you watch for the tell. I think the Hobby Lobby majority opinion has a tell that tells us this case is not about religious freedom.

In response to a notion raised in the dissent: Well, hold on a second. If you allow this corporation to deny coverage for contraception because it has a sincerely held religious belief against contraception, there are other religions and other corporations that might have a sincerely held religious belief against transfusion. That is a sincere belief of certain religions commonly practiced in America; against vaccination, that is a sincerely held religious belief in certain religions in America. There are other sincerely held religious beliefs, but the majority in this opinion says: Oh, don't worry. This is just about contraception. You don't need to worry that the rationale in this case would be used to allow an employer to exclude vaccination or to exclude transfusions.

If those are religious beliefs every bit as sincere as some who think contraception is bad, why wouldn't this ruling apply to those kinds of coverage?

The fact that the Supreme Court took such care in the majority opinion to say: Don't worry. It is not going to apply to that, tells me this is not a case about religious freedom. Because if it were a case about religious freedom, a sincerely held religious belief about transfusions or vaccinations would be equally implicated by this case. The Court instead is very clearly telling people: Don't worry. You don't need to worry about this stuff.

So it is not about religious freedom. I read this case as a very candid admission that what the case is truly about is contraception access.

There is an unfortunate legal movement in this country—that is kind of surprising—where the focus is to deny women access to contraception, even though access to contraception has been constitutionally protected in this country since 1967, nearly 50 years.

I am stunned. I am reluctant as a lawyer to criticize court opinions. Lawyers always have different points of view. You always have to give some latitude that the court might decide something in a different way than you think. But I am stunned to see in the rationale expressed by the majority that the Court is joining an ideological, anti-access movement.

Contraception access is important to women, it is important to families, and it is important to society. For women, contraception is important not only surrounding the planning of pregnancy but the hormones in contraception are often prescribed for all manner of other conditions, some related to pregnancy and reproduction and some unconnected to pregnancy and reproduction. The access to contraception is critically important, and that is why the panel that looked at implementing the Affordable Care Act found that contraception was an important active goal of prevention. Prevention is good. Contraception is part of prevention.

Contraception is also costly. So when a company strips that coverage from employees and says, ''You can just buy it yourself if you want,'' let's be clear. That is not a minor expense, especially in a time where wages have been stagnant. It is a significant expense, and the notion that coverage would be stripped away from thousands and thousands of employees is not a minor burden at all, it is a significant burden on their lives.

Contraception is not only important for women, it is important for society. Contraception and the access to contraception are achieving important social goals. From 2008 to 2011, in 3 years, the number of abortions in the United States fell by 13 percent, and teen pregnancy in this Nation has been falling steadily since 1991. Why are both of these things happening? Those who study these laudable trends conclude that access to contraception is one of the main reasons abortion is falling and that teen pregnancy is falling.

It would seem those are laudable trends that we would want to continue and that access to contraception therefore is very important, but the Court instead finds otherwise.

I want to conclude and say I don't think this is a case about religious freedom. I think the Court has strangely joined an anticontraception ideological crusade. But I want to say a word about religious freedom. It is critically important. I am a lifelong Catholic. I served as a missionary with Jesuit missionaries in 1981. I am a Virginian, and it was a Virginian, James Madison, who wrote the draft of the Constitution, including the First Amendment, the Bill of Rights that protects our rights to religious freedom.

Gary Wills, the great American historian, said, ''Every wonderful idea in the American Constitution was already part of somebody else's Constitution or laws.'' Our drafters did a great job of finding the best and putting it in. But there was only one unique provision in the American Constitution that wasn't part of any organic law before us and that was freedom of religion. Jefferson wrote it into Virginia law, the Statute of Religious Freedom, in 1780. The basic idea was no one can be punished or preferred for their choice of worship or for their choice not to worship. That has been a critical component of American life for a very long time. So religious freedom is incredibly important.

There was nothing about the bill we will take up on the floor tomorrow that impinges upon religious freedom because, as you know, if a church or a religiously affiliated institution or an individual or even a corporation has as their view that contraception is wrong, they can take to the airways. They can run a newspaper ad. They can go stand on a street corner. They can encourage anyone they want by explaining the merits of their view and hoping to persuade someone that they are right, and they are protected in doing that. They are protected in their religious liberty to try to encourage people to follow their points of view. But when these entities try to go beyond that, and in this case corporations, and use legal mechanisms not just to encourage people but whether it is lawsuits or personhood amendments or other things that we see popping up in States and here in this body, not just to discourage use of contraception but instead to reduce access to contraception for women—even women who do not share their moral point of view, who do not share their particular religion—then I view that as extremely troubling and actually contrary to the notion of religious freedom that is established in the First Amendment. Advocate your moral position, but don't force it onto people who have a different moral viewpoint.

In conclusion, I support the bill we will debate tomorrow because it will protect the access to contraception. Whether people choose to use contraception or not will be up to them and to their own medical and their own moral calculation, and that is as it should be in a society that is supposed to protect the rights of all.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, thank you.

Before I get into the business I have come to address, let me thank the distinguished Senator from Virginia for his remarks. I was a lawyer at a time when the previous case on this subject came out of the Supreme Court that said something very different. It said if you were a Native American and if as a Native American you had a sincerely held religious belief that peyote was actually a part of your religion's sacrament, that in pursuing that ritual and that tradition you could utilize peyote notwithstanding the laws of the State to the contrary. That was the argument they made. It was protected by the free exercise of religion. The Supreme Court said absolutely not. No way. If you are a Native American, your sincerely held belief that peyote is an appropriate part of your religious sacrament is overruled because of society's interest in enforcing the law generally.

Now if you are a corporate CEO, a completely different set of rules applies. Remember, in the case of the Native Americans the question was whether that individual could ingest the peyote themselves and they were told no, the interest of the State prevailed. In this case, if you are a corporate CEO, you are being told that you are free to exercise a right to control what other people do. And in this case the Supreme Court completely reversed itself and said no, the State has to back off if you are a corporate CEO telling other people what they have to do. But if you are a Native American seeking to honor your own tradition, well, there the State can butt in and move around.

So in addition to the distinctions the Senator so eloquently and properly described, certain of this might have been influential with the Court in the fact that these were corporate CEOs, and there is very little the corporate CEO can do that the five activists on the conservative side of this Court won't encourage them to do and let them do.

I will reserve for another day statistics of how this Court has over and over again turned itself over to corporate interests and over and over again ruled in favor of corporate interests and over and over again reversed precedent to give precedence to corporate interests in this country.

I thank the Senator.

CLIMATE CHANGE

My original topic of being here before I got into the subject is this is my 74th visit to the floor to urge my colleagues that it is truly time to wake up to the threats of climate change.

The reports keep rolling in. The latest one for coastal States such as ours is a study called ''Risky Business'' that was commissioned by former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who knows something about coastal issues, having been flooded by Sandy, former George W. Bush Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson, and former hedge fund manager Tom Steyer. This report calculated the economic effects of climate change throughout the United States and it found that along our coast between $66 billion and $106 billion worth of existing property—property that Americans own right now—will likely be below sea level by 2050. By 2100, $238 billion to $507 billion worth of Americans' hard-earned property will be underwater.

Now, everything doesn't happen just as you guess. Sometimes you get bad news that there are long odds and you need to be prepared for those long odds. The report found there are 1 in 20 odds that by 2100, the end of this century, there would be around $700 billion of infrastructure below sea level and nearly $730 billion more of infrastructure that would be potentially in trouble during high tides. So our landlocked colleagues may laugh this off, but if a similar threat were looming at their State's door, they would, I submit, be paying attention. For coastal States such as ours, this is deadly serious. The Atlantic coast, including Rhode Island—a coastal State named the Ocean State, the second most heavily populated State in terms of population density in the country—we have a lot of people living along that coastline. Our coast will see the worst of it.

Climate change, unfortunately, has become, mostly since Citizens United for reasons I have elaborated on before, a taboo subject now for Republicans in Congress. So the discussion here of climate change is somewhat one-sided, but Americans who are witnessing climate change's effects firsthand in every State around the country know—and if they don't know they are learning—that climate change is a real problem.

I have discussed my travels to Florida, to Iowa, to North and South Carolina, to Georgia, to New Hampshire, and of the actions these people are taking in their home States to stave off the worst effects of their changing oceans and climate. But at the local level folks truly aren't denying climate change. That is something that is unique to Congress and the peculiar world we inhabit. They are not denying, they are paying attention. And it is not just in coastal States that people are paying attention.

This week I am going to look at Utah. Utah is right here on this section of the map of the southwest corridor of our country. This is a map of temperature trends. Temperature is not complicated. It is not some difficult theory that people have to try to get their minds around. We measure it with thermometers. It is pretty straightforward stuff.

On this chart we see that average temperatures over the last 13 years compared to the long-term average over a century show there has been an increase in temperature across the entire State of Utah. Down here, this region, the average has increased 2 full degrees Fahrenheit. In the southeastern part of the State there are actually spots where the temperature has risen as much as 4.5 degrees Fahrenheit.

Southern Utah is home to iconic national parks including Zion, Bryce Canyon, and Arches National Park. In Utah, park officials aren't denying climate change. Just last week the Park Service released a report called ''Climate Exposure of U.S. National Parks in a New Era of Change.'' This report studied dozens of climate variables in 289 national parks. In Bryce, Zion, and Arches, the report shows higher yearround temperatures, hotter summers and warmer winters. Such significant shifts in temperature can mean less snowpack, worse wildfire seasons, and abnormal conditions for the plants and animals that reside in those parks.

Utah is getting warmer and it is getting drier. The U.S. Geological Survey shows a significant drop in the size and scope of floods in rivers and streams all across the Southwest in this area from 1920 to 2008, and that of course includes southern Utah.

Indeed, here are the symbols for the negative trends, and the biggest symbol for a negative trend in river and stream flooding is this one. If you cannot see the map very clearly, that is southern Utah. Here is the State of Utah right here and there is the location where the highest drying trend in streams is taking place—again, not complicated. This isn't a theory, this is based on simple rainfall measurements and simple flooding measurement.

If you look at it, you will see another place that is going up a lot. We New Englanders are seeing an increase, although in the Southwest they are seeing a substantial decrease. So when those characters come into our hearings and give testimony saying, oh, you don't have to worry about this because there isn't an overall increase in flooding or anything, yeah, because they offset each other—but go to Utah and you see a very distinct trend and it is drier. Other factors, such as population growth and water management policies, play a role, but Lake Powell in Utah is about half full right now. Lake Mead, farther down the Colorado River in Nevada, has drained down to just 39 percent of its capacity. That is the lowest level Lake Mead has ever been since it was first filled behind the Hoover Dam. Scientists at Colorado State University, at Princeton, and at the U.S. Forest Service predict that unless we take major action climate change may lead to water shortages so

severe that Lake Powell and Lake Mead dry up completely.

The drying of the Western United States and of southern Utah means less water for drinking, fighting fires, farming, wildlife, and recreation. Salt Lake City gets 80 percent of its water supply from snowpack in the Uinta and Wasatch Mountains. If predictions hold true, local water managers in Utah will no longer be able to depend on historical data to predict and manage how much water the mountains will yield. Utah will be in a brave new world—a dry new world.

The prolonged drought conditions in the Western United States, compared to the last century, make it ripe for forest fires, and indeed a recent study of western wildfire trends—led by Dr. Philip Dennison of the University of Utah—from 1984 to 2011, fires have become larger and more frequent. The total area burned by these fires is increasing over this time period at roughly 90,000 acres burned per year. That is the rate of increase.

The recent National Climate Assessment similarly shows that ''between 1970 and 2003, warmer and drier conditions increased burned area in western U.S. mid-elevation conifer forests by 650 percent.'' That report is quite clear about the link between climate change and these forest fires in the region, noting that ''climate outweighed other factors in determining burned area in the western U.S.''

These changes in temperature and precipitation are putting Utah's iconic desert sagebrush at risk, according to Peter Alder, an ecologist at Utah State University. Sagebrush is grazed by livestock, and it is important to Utah's ranching industry. Dr. Alder is working with faculty and students from seven area universities to better understand the vulnerability of sagebrush ecosystems to climate change.

These Utah scientists are not denying climate change, and neither is, for instance, Utah State University. Utah State has entire new courses of study to train the next generation of students to predict and combat climate change. Utah State has its own climate action plan. Utah State has an active climate center, and it is not the only one. The University of Utah has an active sustainability center and an army of students and researchers working on addressing climate change. Each year, the University of Utah publishes an annual report on climate change.

Members of Utah's delegation may be pretending climate change is not real, but Utah's universities are not. They are not denying. They are acting. Utah's capital city is not denying climate change.

There may be a barricade of polluter influence around Congress, but mayors all across the country are taking action, including in Utah, as we saw with the unanimous resolution of the Conference of Mayors recently. The United States Conference of Mayors ranked Salt Lake City, UT, and its mayor Ralph Becker first place in the Mayors Climate Protection Center rankings because of the impressive work being done in Salt Lake City. For example, the Salt Lake City Public Safety Building will be the first public safety building in the Nation to achieve a net zero rating, which means it generates as much electricity as it uses.

Utah also has energy investors who are wide awake, building a growing number of solar installations. Community Solar has a pilot project in Salt Lake that allows homeowner groups to purchase solar energy. It is estimated that over its 25-year lifetime, this installation will avoid 5,500 tons of carbon dioxide pollution.

Renewable energy is integral in Utah's energy portfolio moving forward. In this chart, we can see this display showing that by 2050, Utah will rely mostly on wind, solar, geothermal, and natural gas to achieve carbon dioxide emission reductions of 80 percent compared to 1990 levels. As we can see, the yellow is solar. Solar is projected to account for more than half of this shift.

Utah-based businesses, such as EBay, are enhancing renewable energy. EBay built a data center in South Jordan, UT, and wanted to make sure it used only clean energy to run that facility. To accomplish this, EBay worked with GOP State senator Mark Madsen, Rocky Mountain Power—the State's largest electric utility—and a local renewable energy generator on legislation to make renewable energy available to Utah electricity consumers. None of them were denying climate change. The renewable energy bill was unanimously passed by the Utah State Senate and House of Representatives and signed into law by Republican Governor Gary Herbert. EBay employs 1,500 people in Utah, including its 400-member group in Salt Lake City known as the Green Team, dedicated to making the company environmentally responsible. They are not denying climate change in Utah. EBay is actually looking to add another data facility and more jobs using that same clean energy framework.

The faith community in Utah is taking action as well. Utah Interfaith Power and Light is a network of nearly 30 Christian, Jewish, and nondenominational congregations, representing thousands of Utahans seeking ''to promote earth stewardship, clean energy, and climate justice.'' In addition to conducting free energy audits for new-member churches and offering plans to increase energy efficiency in their buildings, Utah Interfaith Power and Light also works to educate its members about climate change and advocates at the local and State level for moral and responsible climate policy.

Then, of course, there is the famous Utah ski industry. The operators of Utah's great ski resorts have been outspoken about the threat climate change poses to their business. Five of them—Alta Ski Area, Canyons Resort, Deer Crest Private Trails, Deer Valley, and Park City Mountain Resort—signed the BICEP coalition's Climate Declaration in support of national action on climate change. They are not denying climate change.

Indeed, the Park City Foundation in Utah issued a report explaining that as drought and increasing temperatures reduced the snowpack in the Cascade Range and the Rocky Mountains, the future of skiing and snowboarding in those ranges is at risk. This Utah report predicts a local temperature increase of 6.8 degrees Fahrenheit by 2075, which could cause a total loss of snowpack in the lower Park City resort area. Beyond the loss to the skiing tradition in Park City, this will result in thousands of lost jobs, tens of millions in lost earnings, and hundreds of millions in lost economic output, and that is according this Utah report.

In Utah as in other States there is a groundswell coming from local communities asking for action on climate change. There are scientists, public health advocates, business owners and corporate leaders, outdoorsmen, faith leaders, State and local officials, and countless others demanding action on climate change and leading the charge.

David Folland is a retired pediatrician, and he is the co-leader of the Salt Lake City Citizens Climate Lobby, which recently joined 7 other Utahans and 600 volunteers from around the country to come to Congress to push us for swift passage of a proper carbon fee. In a Salt Lake City Tribune op-ed last week, Dr. Folland wrote: ''[p]lacing a fee on carbon sources and returning the proceeds to households would create jobs, build the economy, improve public health, and help stabilize the climate.''

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have Dr. Folland's op-ed printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Outside these walls, climate change is an issue Republicans can actually discuss. Outside these walls, 2012 Republican Presidential candidate John Huntsman, who won reelection as Utah's Republican Governor in 2008 with almost 80 percent of the vote—this is a popular guy in Utah—wrote a New York Times op-ed this year entitled ''The G.O.P. Can't Ignore Climate Change.'' That is the title of Governor Huntsman's article.

He wrote:

> While there is room for some skepticism given the uncertainty about the magnitude of climate change, the fact is that the planet is warming, and failing to deal with this reality will leave us vulnerable—and possibly worse. Hedging against risk is an enduring theme of conservative thought. It is also a concept diverse groups can embrace.

That is from Utah's former Governor.

By the way, when he ran for reelection and won by that near 80-percent margin, he was running on a pretty good environmental platform. He was

not denying. But in Congress there is silence from the Republican Party—except those who come and say that climate change is just a big old hoax. It would have to be the most complicated hoax in the world, with most of our corporations, the Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration—NOAA—and innumerable other groups involved in it, and it would be pretty impressive to actually raise the level of the seas 8 to 10 inches as a part of that complicated hoax, but I guess that is their notion of why that is happening.

Here, other than that hoax argument, there is silence. No Republican comes to the floor to say: You are right. This is a problem. We should do something about it. Let's work together. We may not agree on the solution right now, but let's at least work on it as a serious problem.

They won't do that. The Republican Party has taken the position and followed the direction of the polluters. It is as simple as that. I, for one, believe they will be judged very harshly for that choice because Americans know better. Utahns know better. More and more people across America see what is happening before them, and they are no longer fooled by the phony campaign of denial.

I hope this Congress will listen to the people in our home States and the people across this country and wake up to what has now become a clear and present danger. We need to do what the people who elected us sent us here to do, which is face reality, make sensible choices, work together, and solve problems, not stick our heads in the sand and pretend problems don't exist.

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

[From The Salt Lake Tribune, July 11, 2014]

OP-ED: CARBON TAX PROVIDES MARKET-BASED SOLUTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

(By David Folland)

Imagine receiving a check for $390 each month, deposited directly into your checking account, through no effort of yours except that you had previously voted for visionary members of Congress. Indeed that is what a family of 4 would receive if carbon fee and dividend legislation were to be enacted by the Congress, according to a new study by the highly-respected economic analysis firm REMI (Regional Economic Models, Inc.). The study was commissioned by Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL).

Last week I joined 7 other CCL volunteers from Utah in Washington, D.C., to ask our federal elected officials to support such a carbon fee and dividend (F&D) policy. We were among 600 other volunteers who together visited over 500 members of Congress or their aides. Our visits were all part of actions by the non-partisan, non-profit Citizens Climate Lobby, a rapidly growing organization of committed volunteers who are creating the political will for a stable climate. We are taking democracy into our own hands and not leaving our future to the paid lobbyists and special interest groups.

The REMI study modeled the effect of a fee and dividend policy. In this plan, a fee would be charged on the carbon-based fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas) at the point they enter the economy (the mine well head, or port of entry) based on the amount of carbon dioxide they produce when burned. The fee would increase by a defined amount yearly for 20 years. The revenues would be distributed to households equally.

The results after 20 years are striking: 2.8 million jobs would be created; the economy would grow by $1.375 trillion more than the economy with no carbon fee; 227,000 lives would be spared due to reduced air pollution; and carbon dioxide emissions would be reduced by 52 percent.

Sound too good to be true? Not really. By returning all revenues to households, consumers would spend their dividend, adding to demand for goods and services. And energy prices actually decrease after the uth year, as less-expensive energy sources come on line. Americans would enjoy better health as coal-fired power plants and other dirty energy sources are phased out and their toxic fumes eliminated.

This market-based solution contrasts quite markedly to the EPA regulations proposed by President Obama. The EPA regulations pertain only to coal-fired power plants. By contrast, F&D's effects would ripple through the entire economy. Also, the elevated cost of electricity from EPA regulations would affect the poorest citizens most severely. By returning the dividend to households, two thirds of people would receive more in their dividend checks than they would pay for the increased cost of energy and goods, and that would include the poorest among us. Also our proposal would not grow government, thus could appeal to both political parties.

After a long day of lobbying, Rhode Island Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse addressed the CCL volunteers. He suggested that the tipping point that will lead to action and policy on global warming is probably closer than most people think Many who attended the conference have the same feeling. Our members of Congress and/or their aides listened carefully and responded thoughtfully to our proposal.

There is ample reason for our elected federal officials to support carbon fee and dividend legislation whether or not they are concerned about the threats of global warming. Placing a fee on carbon sources and returning the proceeds to households would create jobs, build the economy, improve public health, and help stabilize the climate.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I yield the floor, and I note the absence after quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IMMIGRATION CRISIS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, yesterday I went to Chicago to a residential neighborhood, and I went into a building and saw a piece of American history and an American humanitarian challenge, the likes of which we have seldom seen. In this building were 70 children. They were children who just hours and days ago were at the border of the United States in Mexico. They had turned themselves in to the border officials and they were being processed. Our law says that within 72 hours they need to be moved from the law enforcement world to the world of protection or at least a secure environment. That is the right thing to do. It was a law passed years ago when President Bush was in the White House, signed by him, and I believe unanimously passed by at least one of the Chambers, so it was not controversial at the time. It was thoughtful. It basically said if it is an unaccompanied child at the border, within 72 hours put them in a safe place.

This is one of the safe places across America. It is a shelter in the city of Chicago. It is not the only one. It is protected from the public. If someone went by it in a car, they wouldn't even know it was a shelter with 70 children inside, in a residential neighborhood where for 19 years the shelter has been welcome, because it is clear, secure—no problems.

But now we face a challenge because the number of children unaccompanied coming into the United States is reaching recordbreaking proportions.

America, primarily because of location and other circumstances, seldom has faced anything like a refugee crisis. We can remember efforts by the Haitians or the Cubans, maybe the Vietnamese, the Hmong people, to come to the United States, but our experience pales in comparison to countries such as Jordan. Ten percent of the population of Jordan today is refugees who come to that country from all over the Middle East. With Syria collapsed under the weight of war and all of the horrors that it brought, 2.3 million, maybe 3 million left Syria for countries such as Jordan and Turkey and Lebanon. For these countries, refugees are part of their daily lives. For the United States, it is rare. It is rare to see one. It is rare to speak to one.

That is why yesterday's experience for me was so important. I had heard all of these stories about these children and a lot of speculation about why they are here and what we should do with them, and I wanted to see them firsthand.

Let me tell my colleagues, of the 70 children, there were some who were newborns, babies being held by their mothers. I have reached a point where it is hard for me to guess anyone's age, particularly young people. It is harder still when they are from countries in Central America because they are smaller in stature, many of them malnourished, and they are usually a little older than one might think. They look younger. But five women walked into this dining hall carrying their babies, and I don't believe a single one of them was 15 years old. They had brought these babies, many of them on buses, for 8 days to the border of the United States to try to escape. Cases of rape and assault had led to these pregnancies and these babies, and they were trying to get away from drug gangs and threats on their lives. And here they were, in this neighborhood in Chicago, in a safe place, with others just like them.

Then I went among the children—90 percent of them from Central America;

some from Africa, some from China; 90 percent of them from Central America—and I would speak to them and hear their stories. For many of them, there was a relative in the United States they were hoping to find so they could finally find a safe place. This situation is a terrible humanitarian crisis involving vulnerable children.

The United States is about to be tested. We are going to be tested as a people—our generation—as to how we respond. I hope we pass that test.

Remember, our country—the United States—issues a report card every year. The State Department issues a human rights report card on the world. The United States stands in judgment of the world and their record on human rights, and we take into consideration the way they treat women, how other countries treat children, how they treat refugees, and we grade them. That is a pretty bold position for us to stand in judgment of other countries, but we do, hoping we can set a standard they will follow and hoping we can hold them to those standards. Now we are going to be graded. The United States will be graded as to how we respond to this crisis.

The President has sent a bill to Congress. He is asking for a substantial sum of money so we can not only deal with this issue at the border but beyond, in places such as the shelter I visited in Chicago.

There is a lot of speculation among Senators and Congressmen about how our laws are going to deal with this current flood of children coming into the United States. We know why they are coming. Many are being pushed out of their country by drug gangs and violence—girls who are threatened with sexual assault if they don't give in to a gang leader and then, if they do, killed and left in plastic bags by the side of the road. Young boys are drafted into these gangs at the point of a gun; they are going to comply or be shot and killed. That is the reality, not to mention the horrible poverty which is endemic to these three countries—Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

So now we have to decide what we will do. There are several things that are obvious. First, I am glad President Obama and Vice President BIDEN are going to Central America and telling these families: Please, do not send any more children. It is just too dangerous. They don't automatically come into the United States and receive citizenship. If people have heard that, it is wrong.

We have told these countries, begged their leaders to help us in discouraging these children from coming. But in many cases desperate parents, desperate families are doing desperate things.

I asked yesterday at the shelter: Is it true that some of the teenage girls who arrive here—and they all go through a physical exam—are on birth control pills? They said: Yes. Before they start the journey, their families will give the girls birth control pills as a protection from pregnancy because they fear they will be assaulted and raped. I can't imagine—I cannot imagine a family situation so desperate where they would make that decision, but it is happening.

I looked too at some of the comments that have been made. There are people who have said we need to flood the border of the United States with National Guard troops. It doesn't make sense because these children are not trying to sneak past border guards; they are turning themselves in as soon as they cross the border because they have a little piece of paper with the name of someone in the United States to contact. So more troops and guards on the border won't change those desperate children.

One of them I saw from Guatemala with his little sister. She is a cute little thing but too shy to say anything to me. He, through a translator, said a few words, and he carried her on his shoulders across the Rio Grande River. That is what his responsibility was, and he was going to get across that river with his little sister. He did. That is why we need to look at this in human terms as well.

Before I came to Congress, I used to be a lawyer in Central Illinois, the small town of Springfield. It is not a big city, I guess, by our State's terms, but we are proud of our population—but not a major city. I practiced law there, and I knew what it was like in a small town to practice law. I also knew this: No one in good conscience with an ethical bone in their body would put a 6-year-old kid in a courtroom and say: Good luck. We never did that. It was inconceivable. If there was a child whose fate was going to be decided in a courtroom, there was a guardian ad litem appointed to represent that child's interests—not the interests of any other party, just that child. There may have been an attorney appointed in addition to represent that child because we realize they cannot make decisions for themselves.

Now we are faced with a suggestion by some that when it comes to these children, within a few days after their arrival in the United States, they will be put in a courtroom. If Members of the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives came to that shelter in Chicago and saw those little children sitting at the table, they would be embarrassed by that suggestion. We can't do that. It isn't fair to them, and it doesn't reflect well on our values if it is even suggested. We have to have a process that is fair and one that reflects our values in the United States.

This is a human tragedy. These children have made it through this death-defying journey. I can tell my colleagues it broke my heart when I heard them tell their stories. A little girl—she was there with her little brother. She was 12; her little brother was 6. He had Down syndrome, and she brought him from Honduras to the United States. She said she came by bus and she was on that bus for 6 or 7 days before she made it to the border. Can my colleagues imagine turning a child loose to catch a bus ride that would last 6 or 7 days to go to a country in the hopes they might be safer and also take their disabled little brother with her? Every time that little boy would get up and scramble around the room, she was right after him. She wasn't going to let him out of her sight. That is what her life is and what it has been, and it is an indication of the kind of children we are now facing and need to deal with.

This is not a political issue, although politics are involved. It is much more. It is humanitarian—testing who we are, what we believe. It is a challenge to us to deal with immigration in the 21st century. It is a challenge to us as well to make sure that at the end of the day, history writes this chapter about the American people and says they were good and caring people, compassionate and caring people.

Today I received a press release that was put out by a religious group, the Evangelical Leaders of America. This is not my religion, but I respect very much what they had to say. I would like to read what one of the ministers said:

> As a former Texan, my heart goes to the border of Texas. As a born-again Christian, the Gospel of Jesus Christ calls me to compassionate action for those who are suffering right now as a result of the immigration crisis, especially the children.

This was written by Ronnie Floyd, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of the multicampus Cross Church in northwest Arkansas. His Friday Baptist Press op-ed continues:

> This is an emergency situation that requires the best of each of us in America . . . The gospel of Jesus Christ moves me to call on all of us to demonstrate compassionate action toward the immigrant.

As I said, he is not a member of my religion, but I respect very much that he would stand up and speak out and remind people that this really is a test. Regardless of whether one is a Christian or some other denomination or one has no religion, it is a test of who we are and our human values.

When I read the suggestion that these young children need to be placed in a hearing room or a courtroom within a few days with the possibility of someone standing by their side—that is wrong. That is just wrong. We can't let that happen.

Many years ago we signed a refugee convention saying that when it came to refugees, countries in the world should accept and adopt the same humane standards.

Now we are facing our refugee crisis here in the United States. We need to make it clear to these countries that these children are not coming in to be citizens of the United States. That is not in the cards. But we never want to be in a position where these children

are returned to dangerous situations, harmed, and it is on our conscience, on our watch. That is unacceptable.

I want to say one thing in closing. We need to solve this problem, but God forbid that is the end of the conversation. We passed an immigration bill, a comprehensive immigration bill, to clean up this broken immigration system over a year ago on the Senate floor. Democrats and Republicans agreed on it, and we sent it to the House of Representatives. But for over a year they have refused to even call the bill, refused to even debate the bill, refused to even come up with a substitute to the bill. They are ignoring the broken immigration system in America and criticizing this President when the breakdown is obvious.

The President is ready. He has said over and over he will step aside and let them work it out and come up with a congressional answer. But there is no excuse for this. For Congress to refuse to accept its responsibility when it comes to immigration reform is just wrong. I am glad the Senate met its responsibility, and now I call on my colleagues over in the House to do the same.

(Mr. DONNELLY assumed the Chair.)

Mr. President, on June 30, five conservative Justices of the Supreme Court held that certain for-profit corporations—closely held corporations—could refuse to provide their female employees with coverage for health care benefits that are guaranteed by law. This Hobby Lobby decision, some estimates suggest, would apply to as many as 90 percent of American businesses, depending on what the courts define as a ''closely held'' corporation.

This was an activist decision by an activist Supreme Court. Congress never intended for for-profit corporate entities to claim religious beliefs or to use religious objections to deny their employees rights guaranteed by law.

For-profit corporations, for the record, are not people, and they are not created for a religious or charitable purpose. They are created to make a profit while giving their owners protections from liability under the law. I have been to a lot of churches. I have yet to see a corporation in a pew in a church.

Moreover, previous cases ruled on by the Supreme Court have established a tradition of privacy—one that permits women, not the government or their employers, to make their own decisions about birth control and family planning.

The ruling in Hobby Lobby violates that tradition by empowering for-profit corporations to claim religious objections to a law that guarantees access to cost-free contraceptive coverage. As a result of this decision, women across America are at risk of losing access to elements of their health care coverage, including coverage for prescription birth control pills and more.

Birth control is an important part of a woman's health care, and millions—99 percent of child-bearing-age women—rely on these benefits.

The Affordable Care Act and its regulations provide for insurance coverage for birth control, allowing for a woman, her family, and her doctor to decide what is best. As a result, about 30 million women have gained access to cost-free insurance coverage for contraceptive services, including 1.1 million in my State of Illinois—almost 10 percent of the population.

This is coverage that nearly all women use. In 2013 the Centers for Disease Control reported that 99 percent of sexually active women between the ages of 15 and 44 have used birth control at some point in their lives.

So here is the bottom line: No for-profit corporate entity should be allowed to discriminate against women and take away an insurance benefit that a woman is entitled to just because the owner of the company does not agree with it. A woman's personal health choices are none of her boss's business.

Last week my colleagues and I introduced legislation that would ensure that women affected by this decision can continue to get contraceptive coverage they need and that the law provides regardless of who signs their paycheck.

Importantly, this bill being offered by Senators PATTY MURRAY and MARK UDALL prevents any corporation from using the Supreme Court decision to deny women access to services guaranteed to them under Federal law.

Although the Supreme Court ruling focused primarily on contraceptive coverage, it left the door open for future litigation challenging other basic health care benefits—vaccines, blood transfusions. This is unacceptable, and the legislation before us would stop this discrimination once and for all.

This legislation is not about overriding the religious beliefs of any living person or any nonprofit charity. Our legislation respects and accommodates the beliefs of individuals and nonprofits. Remember, the Hobby Lobby case involved for-profit companies which are not human beings but are legal entities that are incorporated for a profit-making purpose.

When people decide to incorporate a for-profit entity, they agree that the entity will be subject to basic laws that protect the rights of their employees, including laws that prevent discrimination and laws that enable women who work for them to access adequate health care.

The decision of the activist Hobby Lobby majority suddenly allows these for-profit corporations to declare themselves exempt from these basic laws and discriminate against women's health care coverage. That is a significant change in the law and, as a result, untold thousands of American women will end up losing access to affordable health care that they had been guaranteed.

This is a problem, and it is a challenge. We need to protect women's access to affordable prescription contraception and prevent corporate entities—for-profit corporations—from interfering with their employees' health care decisions.

This week in the Senate my colleagues and I will have a chance to vote on it. I think it is a critical vote. I might add another element here. Many people want to discuss the issue of birth control in the context of abortion, a hot-button issue, and it has been for years across America. The record is pretty clear. If there are more unplanned pregnancies, there are more likely more abortions. Reducing the number of unplanned pregnancies reduces the number of abortions. It is simple math. There are some who disagree on theological grounds. They cannot disagree on biological grounds. So standing up for family planning and birth control to avoid unplanned and unwanted pregnancies is going to reduce the incidence of abortion in this country—something I hope all of us feel would be a positive development. I certainly do.

So I hope we can stand together this week on a bipartisan basis and tell the Supreme Court they are wrong and pass this new law that takes away the power of bosses to determine the health care of the women who work for them.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold his suggestion?

Mr. DURBIN. I do. I am sorry; I did not see my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. President.

I am honored to follow those eloquent and powerful remarks by my friend and colleague from Illinois, and I am particularly impressed and moved by his comments on young people coming across the border that deserve better from this Nation—better in the care they receive when they are here, better in the due process and the justice this country gives them once they have arrived. But I am here to talk about the Hobby Lobby decision by the Supreme Court and to second in every single respect the remarks that Senator DURBIN has just made.

I went to the site of a new Hobby Lobby store in the State of Connecticut, being built in Manchester—the second in Connecticut—where its goods and services will be available to consumers in Connecticut. It is an impressive new structure. But it was not a groundbreaking or ribbon cutting. I went there to call on Hobby Lobby to do right for its employees and for its customers in the State of Connecticut.

I went there to make public a letter that I have written to the chief executive of Hobby Lobby, asking that he and his company respect the law, history, and policy of our State and also of the United States.

The U.S. Supreme Court has made its decision interpreting the Religious

Freedom Restoration Act in giving this corporation—a for-profit entity—the right to tell its women employees that they have no access to certain kinds of contraceptive care approved by the FDA. That is a legal decision that cannot be overturned by my speaking on the floor of the Senate or in my writing to the CEO of Hobby Lobby. But it can be overturned by a law that changes that opinion—changes the opinion, in effect, by overruling it.

That is the purpose of the Not My Boss's Business Act, as well as the Protect Women's Health From Corporate Interference Act, and that is the reason I am going to vote for it because I feel that women should be making these decisions with their doctors, and that neither politicians nor business executives nor their corporate entities should be interfering and intruding in that decision.

We can debate whether corporations ought to have these rights under the law, whether they are entitled to use the law, in effect, to assert legal claims, whether to the First Amendment or to the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. This decision was a statutory one. We can disagree with it all we want. But the way to overturn it is to legally adopt a new statute here.

That is why I am so strongly supporting this change in the law that I hope will be adopted on a bipartisan basis, because there ought to be nothing partisan about women's health care, about preventing unnecessary abortion, as Senator DURBIN has said so well, and about providing a form of health care that really is in the interests of families as well as women. It is in all of our interests.

I called on Hobby Lobby to put aside the technical distinctions that it can assert and the legal principles that it may invoke because it is a self-funded plan under the law, but simply do the right thing and follow Connecticut's law, policy, and history.

Connecticut has a law. It is a State statute that was adopted in 1999. I vigorously advocated for it. It requires that contraceptive care be covered by insurance plans—any contraceptive method approved by the FDA. That is the law of Connecticut—well established, long accepted, and strongly supported, and Hobby Lobby is flouting it. Maybe in letter it has a leg to stand on, but in spirit it is thumbing its nose at the people of the State of Connecticut. My message to Hobby Lobby is, if you want Connecticut customers, respect Connecticut's law.

Now, this principle of privacy—of women following their conscience and their conviction, making these decisions on their own, one way or the other, to use contraceptives or not, after consulting with their doctor or other medical experts and their family, their clergy, personal advisors—this principle of personal privacy is enshrined not only in Connecticut law but in our history. In fact, Connecticut has led the Nation in asserting and respecting the right of privacy. Griswold v. Connecticut, which struck down a prohibition on the sale of contraceptives, arose in Connecticut, argued by a great renowned Connecticut lawyer Catherine Roraback.

The right of privacy, as one of our Supreme Court Justices said, is essentially and fundamentally the right to be let alone. It is the right to be let alone from unwarranted government interference and intrusion. This interpretation of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act by the Supreme Court contravenes that basic principle embodied and enshrined in Connecticut history as well as law.

I call on Hobby Lobby to respect that law and our policy of respecting that right of privacy that is embedded and respected in the way that law enforcement as well as our statutes and our courts interpret their role in Connecticut, and their authorities and their powers. The fundamental principle here is that religious liberty should be respected.

It is the religious liberty of those executives at Hobby Lobby, its owners and private corporation shareholders, for-profit entity owners. They deserve respect for their religious liberty. But religious liberty is about the right to practice your religion; it is not the right to impose your religion on someone else. This country was founded on that fundamental principle of religious liberty and the right of privacy, the right to be let alone from unnecessary and unwarranted interference. It is the right of privacy and religious liberty that is at stake here in this activist, erroneous Supreme Court decision, which we have the power to overturn here, and to restore religious freedom, truly restore the liberty of conscience and conviction that is so fundamental to American life and American exceptionalism.

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.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

RECOGNIZING DRESS FOR SUCCESS LEXINGTON

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Dress for Success Lexington and its Kentucky co-founders, Analisa Wagoner and Jennifer Monarch. It was my distinct pleasure to help these women secure 501(c)(3) nonprofit status from the IRS for their business, and I am honored to know that I have played a role, albeit a minor one, in all the good that will continue to come of Wagoner and Monarch's venture.

Dress for Success was founded in New York City in 1997. Since then the organization had expanded into 128 cities around the world, including locations in Louisville and Lexington, KY.

As its name suggests, Dress for Success provides gently used, professional clothes to disadvantaged women. This is not, however, the totality of the organization's services. Looking the part is indeed a piece of the equation, but to ensure success they also provide counseling and training as their clients navigate the jobs market and begin work.

Jennifer and Analisa opened the doors to Dress for Success Lexington over a year ago. In the intervening time, they were inundated with enough clothing donations to render their initial location inoperable. Theirs is a business model that does not work unless people are willing to give. Fortunately, helping others in need is second nature for the people of Lexington, KY.

Last September, Dress for Success Lexington moved into a newer, much larger location in the Eastland Shopping Center. And with its newly acquired non-profit status, which makes the organization eligible for certain grants, donations, and a tax-exempt status, the future looks decidedly bright for Dress for Success Lexington.

Dress for Success Lexington is a model for serving the community. They are not just helping people—more importantly they are providing the tools and training for women to help themselves, and in turn do the same for others.

Therefore, I ask that my Senate colleagues join me in paying tribute to these exemplary citizens and Dress for Success Lexington.

Mr. President, the Lexington Herald-Leader recently published an article profiling Analisa Wagoner and Jennifer Monarch, and their work with Dress for Success Lexington. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Lexington Herald-Leader, Aug. 21, 2013]

DRESS FOR SUCCESS LEXINGTON HAS FOUND A HOME, PLANS TO OPEN IN LATE SEPTEMBER

(By Merlene Davis)

I wrote about Analisa Wagoner and Jennifer Monarch in April as they were being overrun by mounds of gently worn clothing.

They had run out of room for the generous donations from Lexington women who were more than willing to help their less fortunate sisters get on their feet.

A bit overwhelmed but definitely not discouraged, Wagoner and Monarch had been approved to start a local affiliate of the