

against efforts to roll back protections for women, minorities, or any group that has faced discrimination.

I hope that instead of focusing on ways to limit health care options for women, we can join together to promote the interests of women across America by supporting this bill. Nothing less than the economic security of our families is at stake.

PROTECT WOMEN'S HEALTH FROM CORPORATE INTERFERENCE ACT

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to allow us to begin debate on the Protect Women's Health From Corporate Interference Act of 2014, of which I am a cosponsor.

One of this Nation's founding principles is respect for religious faith. Most all of us agree that one American should not be able to impose his or her religious convictions upon another. Yet the outcome of the Supreme Court's recent decision in the Hobby Lobby case is that thousands of Americans may lose the ability to make the most personal choices about what health care meets their religious or ethical standards and hand those decisions over to an employer.

The Court's reasoning in the Hobby Lobby decision was deeply flawed. As I and several colleagues argued in a brief to the Court, applying the Religious Freedom Restoration Act as the Court did seriously misconstrues the language of the statute and ignores the intent of Congress in passing it. Giving for-profit corporations the power to impose the religious beliefs of managers or owners upon employees is what violates basic religious freedom.

It is a central feature of our health care system that millions of Americans receive health insurance through employer-sponsored plans and those employers are most often, as was the case with Hobby Lobby, corporations. Business owners choose to incorporate because forming a corporation means access to limited liability and other government-conferred privileges.

But corporations don't have faiths. People do. That includes the women who have now lost their ability to make the most important and personal decisions about their health care.

If we are to say we truly value the freedom to practice any religion or no religion, as we see fit, surely that includes the freedom for American women to make choices about their own health care without the imposition of their employer's religious convictions. The Supreme Court's decision has elevated the religious faith of a business's owners above the values of that business's employees. That is not what the law envisions, and it is not what Americans believe.

I strongly support this legislation to repair the damage the Supreme Court has done. We should proceed to this bill, debate it, vote on it, and hopefully pass it. America's women and their families deserve nothing less.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of the Protect Women From Corporate Interference Act, and I praise Senator MURRAY and Senator UDALL (of Colorado) for their work on this bill.

Let me first discuss the Supreme Court's 5-4 decision in *Hobby Lobby v. Burwell*—a decision that in my view is deeply disappointing. In the Hobby Lobby case, the Supreme Court found that large, closely-held, for-profit corporations have religious-freedom rights under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (RFRA). Major corporations can now assert a religious objection to generally applicable federal law.

It is possible such corporations will not get most exemptions they seek. This will be examined on a case-by-case basis. But the point is the Court has opened the door to granting these sorts of exemptions to large, for-profit corporations.

This is a far-reaching result that Congress never intended when it enacted the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

As 18 other senators and I made clear to the Court in an amicus brief in the Hobby Lobby case, Congress's purpose in passing the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in 1993 was simple. Congress wanted to strengthen individuals' free-exercise protections, after a Supreme Court decision in *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990) limited those rights. But Congress never intended to grant new free-exercise protections to artificial, for-profit business corporations.

The Court's decision in Hobby Lobby went far beyond what Congress intended in passing the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The Federal law limited by Hobby Lobby was the Affordable Care Act's requirement that preventive health services including contraceptives are covered without cost-sharing in both individual and employer-provided health plans. Preventive health services include contraception because it is basic health care for women. This is an important benefit secured by federal law for all American women, 99 percent of whom have used contraception at some point in their lives. The medical community has almost unanimously recognized contraception as basic and essential health care. As the Guttmacher Institute explained in 2011: Contraceptive use "help[s] women avoid short intervals between births, thereby reducing the risk of poor birth outcomes." "[S]hort birth intervals have been linked with numerous negative perinatal outcomes," including "low birth weight, pre-term birth and small size for gestational age." Contraceptives can also be used to treat common medical conditions including "menstrual-related migraines, the treatment of pelvic pain that accompanies endometriosis, and of bleeding due to uterine fibroids."

The Institute of Medicine also recognized the importance of these benefits

when it recommended that all FDA-approved contraceptives should be covered without cost-sharing, pursuant to the Women's Health Amendment to the health care law, which I strongly supported.

Yet the Court's decision in Hobby Lobby means a woman's employer can for religious reasons ignore the federal requirement to include this important health benefit in its health plan.

To me, that is wrong. A woman's employer-provided health plan should include basic preventive services required by law, without the owners of the corporation she works for imposing their own personal religious views upon her health care decisions.

I understand some have argued that this decision doesn't impact women's access to contraception because it doesn't allow a corporation to bar a woman from buying contraception. That's ridiculous. Of course health insurance coverage impacts access to care. That is the whole point of insurance. No one would argue that if an employer decided not to cover antibiotics that patients would still have the same access to needed medication on their own. When insurance coverage is limited, access is limited as well, particularly for those of lower financial means.

According to a 2009 study from the Guttmacher Institute, 23 percent of women surveyed reported having a harder time paying for birth control during the economic downturn, and this number rose to one out of three among those who were financially worse off compared to the year before. In fact, my Republican colleagues felt that prescription drug coverage was so important to ensuring patient access to medication that they led the creation of Medicare Part D, which was signed into law by President Bush. I supported that legislation and still believe that health insurance coverage is critical to ensuring patient access.

It is also important to note that contraception is not the only issue here. The Hobby Lobby decision means that other Federal health laws—including other benefits required by law, or even coverage itself—could be the subject of a religious objection by a corporate employer.

In the United States more than half of all individuals get insurance through their employer, and estimates suggest that more than half of Americans work for a closely-held corporation.

In the Affordable Care Act Congress recognized the importance of preventive care. We included coverage without a copay for effective prevention services as determined by independent medical experts. I will just name some: Blood pressure and cholesterol screening, colonoscopies, immunizations, HIV tests, mammograms and cervical cancer screening, diabetes screening, autism screening for children, hearing tests for newborns and screening for sickle-cell anemia.

The point is certain essential, preventive services for adults and children

must be part of employer-provided health care under the law. But the Hobby Lobby decision grants for-profit corporations the ability to seek a religious exemption from providing them. Those exemptions may or may not be granted, but the Supreme Court has now opened the door to those claims.

In my view this is at odds with the fundamental principle that health care decisions should be made by patients in consultation with their doctors.

This bill is simple: it would protect elements of employer-provided health care plans that are already required by law against challenge on the basis of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

It would not infringe any individual's constitutional right to the free exercise of religion, nor would it alter existing exemptions and accommodations for religious organizations and non-profits.

I urge my colleagues to defend the critical health protections that we have created and join me in supporting this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2:10 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to reserve the last 3 minutes of debate for my time, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from Washington.

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

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, in a few minutes we are going to vote to proceed to debate on the Protect Women's Health from Corporate Interference Act—or, as we call it, the Not My Boss's Business Act—straightforward, simple legislation that would ensure that no CEO or corporation can come between you and your guaranteed access to health care, period.

Women across the country are watching. Affordability of care equals access to care, and we know that millions of Americans lacked health insurance prior to the Affordable Care Act because they couldn't afford it, not because it wasn't available to them to purchase. Contraceptives should be a part of the options in women's health care because it is an essential part. We don't single out other benefits for employees. Why should we single out benefits that are so important to women in this country?

Now is the time for our colleagues to answer a few basic questions. Who should be in charge of a woman's

health care decision? Should it be the woman making those decisions with her partner and her doctor and her faith or should it be her boss making those decisions for her based on his own religious beliefs? To me and to the vast majority of people across the country, the answer to that question is obvious: Women should call the shots when it comes to their health care decisions, not their boss, not the government, not anyone else, period.

But we are here today because five men on the Supreme Court disagreed. Five men on the Supreme Court rolled back the clock on women across America. We are here today because we simply cannot allow that to stand.

In the aftermath of that decision, women across America turned up here in Congress and demanded we fix it. That is why I worked with my partner, the senior Senator from Colorado, to introduce this bill, and we have 46 co-sponsors in the Senate and over 120 organizations that have voiced their support now. So I sincerely hope our Republican colleagues will join us in allowing us to proceed to debate on this important bill.

I wish to remind them that women across the country are watching. In fact, we have a number of them here in the Nation's Capitol today, and I believe they will be very interested in seeing who is on their side.

Thank you, Madam President. I yield the floor, and I ask unanimous consent to yield back all remaining time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 459, S. 2578, a bill to ensure that employers cannot interfere in their employees' birth control and other health care decisions.

Harry Reid, Patty Murray, Mark Udall, Richard J. Durbin, Jeff Merkley, Debbie Stabenow, Jack Reed, Carl Levin, Christopher A. Coons, Elizabeth Warren, Jeanne Shaheen, Michael F. Bennet, Jon Tester, Patrick J. Leahy, Martin Heinrich, Maria Cantwell, Christopher Murphy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 459, S. 2578, a bill to ensure that employers cannot interfere in their employees' birth control and other health care decisions, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) is necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 228 Leg.]

YEAS—56

Baldwin	Harkin	Murphy
Begich	Heinrich	Murray
Bennet	Heitkamp	Nelson
Blumenthal	Hirono	Pryor
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Reed
Boxer	Kaine	Rockefeller
Brown	King	Sanders
Cantwell	Kirk	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Landrieu	Stabenow
Casey	Leahy	Tester
Collins	Levin	Udall (CO)
Coons	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	Markey	Walsh
Durbin	McCaskill	Warner
Feinstein	Menendez	Warren
Franken	Merkley	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Mikulski	Wyden
Hagan	Murkowski	

NAYS—43

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Ayotte	Flake	Portman
Barrasso	Graham	Reid
Blunt	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Burr	Heller	Rubio
Chambliss	Hoeben	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Coburn	Isakson	Shelby
Cochran	Johanns	Thune
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Cornyn	Lee	Vitter
Crapo	McCain	Wicker
Cruz	McConnell	
Enzi	Moran	

NOT VOTING—1

Schatz

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 56 and the nays are 43. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is not agreed to.

The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I enter a motion to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on the motion to proceed to S. 2578.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

The Senator from Vermont.

IMMIGRATION CRISIS

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, over the years I have frequently spoken on the Senate floor about refugees. I have asked my fellow Senators to support our humanitarian refugee efforts in farflung corners of the world. In doing so, I cite America's role as a human rights leader and our long history of providing refuge to those fleeing persecution and violence. I also remind people of a time in the past, around World War II, when this country unwisely closed its borders to people who were fleeing the Holocaust in Germany. They came here, they were turned back, sent back, many of them to certain death in the death camps. That was a sorry part of our history. Usually our history reflects what we see in the Statue of Liberty: a beckoning torch to refuge. But now the refugee crisis has come back again and to our own border.

It is a complicated problem. I hope we will stop trying to react to whatever was in the latest news cycle 12½ seconds ago so we can get to the next sound bite 12½ seconds from now and resist the urge to let politics shape our response. Critics are arguing that the increase in unaccompanied children arriving at the southwest border is driven by recent changes in our immigration policy. This is a sound bite. The facts, of course, are a lot different. They tell a different and more complicated story.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has found over 50 percent of the children ages 12 to 17 arriving from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras have been forcibly displaced and have claims to international protection because of the violence they have encountered. If changes in immigration policy were the primary factor, we would expect to see an across-the-board increase in children arriving from Mexico and Central America.

What Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras have in common is widespread corruption and weak governments that have failed to implement effective social and economic programs or to protect their most vulnerable citizens from record levels of violence. This reality, more than any change in U.S. policy, is responsible for the massive increase in unaccompanied minors arriving on our southwest border.

It is true that many of these children do not have claims to immigration relief and they are going to be returned. For them, the dangers of this trip are not worth it, and we must discourage them from making the arduous journey alone. But others are fleeing murder or being forced into gangs or girls in their early teens are being raped and impregnated. This is what they are escaping.

There is no doubt that simply maintaining the status quo is not an option. We should take up and pass the administration's emergency supplemental request without delay. But instead of supporting the supplemental, Republicans are trying to use the crisis to promote fear and their enforcement-only agenda. It has not worked in the past. It will not work now. These children coming across the border are not trying to flee from enforcement. If they see somebody in uniform, they run to them, thinking that finally they are escaping the gangs and the murderers and the rapists, and now they suddenly feel safe because they see an American in uniform. As we know from the experience of other countries facing far greater refugee crises, increased detention and other messages of deterrence do not persuade desperate people from taking dangerous journeys.

Some Members of Congress are proposing that the way to solve this problem is by amending the Trafficking Victims Protection Act to make it easier to deport these children by rushing them through a superficial hearing—and it would be superficial—with-

out access to counsel or child welfare specialists, in a country strange to them and in a language different than theirs. That is unacceptable. We are talking about young children—6 and 7 and 8 years old—who have experienced horrific violence and now are in a country where they don't even speak the language. It is unconscionable to push them through our complicated legal system terrified and alone, without a lawyer, and with the ultimate idea that they will be summarily deported back to the very danger they fled. I will vote against anything that would allow such a travesty.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act is not a windfall for these children. It hasn't been from the time President George W. Bush signed it into law until today. It simply provides commonsense protections such as requiring the children who arrive alone to be interviewed by a child welfare specialist and have a meaningful opportunity to tell their story to a judge. That is how we identify victims of trafficking or sexual violence or persecution. If improving the efficiency of the process is the goal, the administration already has the discretion to do that. The funding for immigration judges and legal assistance in the supplemental will further help. We can address this humanitarian crisis without watering down our law. We don't have to turn our backs on our own basic values as Americans—the basic values that brought my grandparents to Italy from Vermont and my great-great grandparents from Ireland to Vermont. It is our humanitarian values. Let's not turn our backs on them.

The problem, in fact, we are facing now could be alleviated in part if the Republican-controlled House of Representatives would allow a vote on the Senate's comprehensive immigration reform bill, S. 744. We had hundreds of hours of hearings, of markups, of debate, sometimes going late into the evening, and then days of debate on the floor, and we passed it by a strong bipartisan majority. We passed this bill 1 year ago, and the Republican leadership in the House will not even allow it to come to a vote, even though it would probably pass in the same form as we did. They will not let it come to a vote because whether people vote for or against it, there are some people who will disagree with the vote, so it is easier to vote maybe. No matter what the humanitarian crisis we have, vote maybe. Don't vote yes, don't vote no; vote maybe by not voting, but then blame it on the President, blame it on everybody else.

The Senate stepped up and we passed a bill the President said he would sign. The Senate-passed bill calls for nearly 20,000 new Border Patrol agents, 3,500 additional Customs and Border Protection officers, and 700 miles of fencing. We have heard people stand and say—as though they suddenly found this out—we need tougher laws to fight back against coyotes and cartels that

want an opportunity to exploit these vulnerable children. I have heard some of the same people refuse to vote on a bill and say we need this protection. Read the bill. S. 744 does that too. It has tougher provisions to fight against human smuggling and enhanced penalties in situations that result in serious bodily injury, death, bribery or corruption.

We have done it. We have done it in the Senate. Why isn't there a hue and cry? I understand it is very easy, if you are going to do a sound bite for the evening news or something, to stand up and say: Why haven't Obama and the Democrats acted? It takes a little bit more time to say: Why haven't you voted for a bill that does everything you say is needed? Why won't the Republican leadership even allow the House Members—Republicans and Democrats—to vote on a bill that does everything they say they need?

I want to thank Senators HARKIN and FEINSTEIN and DURBIN for their comments at the last week's Appropriations Committee hearing. It is clear to me that they, too, understand our Nation is at a crossroads with this crisis. The world is watching how we are going to respond. How is the greatest Nation on Earth going to respond?

I know one person who spoke out: Pope Francis. He has urged us to protect these children. Well, I think the Pope is right.

We have a choice. We can either make good on the promises we have already written into our law and Republicans and Democrats have voted for, or we can decide: Gosh, we didn't mean it. We voted for it, we gave great press conferences, but we did not mean it. Now, gee whiz, it is complicated—as though life is always easy—so let's just rewrite the law. If we do that, just send these children back. Send these children back to the murderers, the rapists, the gangs. Doesn't that turn our back on the very principles on which this Nation was founded—the principles that brought my grandparents here from Italy, my great-grandparents here from Ireland?

Where are those principles? We forgot them at the beginning of the Holocaust. We look at the people who died, the number of Jews who went to the ovens because we had forgotten our principles.

Well, President George W. Bush was right in signing the bill. The Republicans and Democrats who voted for it were right. Let's not turn our backs. If we want to do something beyond the sound bites, something realistic, pass the supplemental for the people we need to do it for and allow the House of Representatives to vote up or down on the bill that Republicans and Democrats voted for here in the Senate a whole year ago. But do not let the supplemental request be a political football. It should be passed clean, without delay. Do not try to remove all the protections for victims of human trafficking.

Pass the supplemental, and then have the courage to stand up and vote yes or no on S. 744. We did here in the Senate. Republicans and Democrats came together. A large majority of us passed it in the Senate. Why can't the House of Representatives do the same thing? I will tell you why. They are afraid whichever way they vote, it might be unpopular. Well, that is what you expect. I have cast more votes than all but a half dozen Senators in the history of this country. Can anybody go back through all those thousands upon thousands of votes and find some they could attack me on? Of course. I could give them a list myself. Can I find some that I probably on second thought wish I had cast differently? Of course I can. But I had the courage to vote yes or no. I was criticized when I became the first Vermonter—in fact, the only Vermonter—to ever vote against the war in Vietnam. The authorization was cut off by one vote. Today it would be hard to find anybody who supported that war.

My point is not whether as a Senator from Vermont I vote right or wrong or any one of us as a Senator from our State votes right or wrong—but at least vote. That is what we said we would do when we were elected: vote. So I am talking about what is wrong with immigration law when you are afraid to even vote one way or the other. But let's not turn our back on the principles this country stands for. Let's not say to 7- or 8- or 9-year-old children—trying to escape a fate that my children or my grandchildren would never face—sorry, we are too great and big and busy a country to worry about you. Go back and face your fate, whatever it might be, because we don't care. That is not the America I serve. That is not the America I love. That is not the place where the Senate should be if we are going to be the conscience of the Nation.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, I want to spend a few minutes discussing the effect and the premise of the legislation on which we just decided not to move forward.

I have spent 25 years of my life caring for women. There is not a complication of pregnancy I have not handled. I have seen every aspect of it. I have delivered babies the size of my little finger and watched them move their little arms, not yet far enough along to survive. I have cared for women in the midst of lost pregnancies and the tragedy and trauma and the heartbreak. I have cared for women who have had abortions and the complications that

has completed and exacerbated in their own lives from psychological to real physical problems. I have actually performed abortions to save women's lives who had severe congenital heart defects and would have died had their pregnancy continued.

But the premise under which this bill was brought forward is an absolute false premise. You see, I come from Oklahoma. David Green and his family come from Oklahoma. They are the owners of Hobby Lobby. They are one of the finest groups of people I have ever met in my life. They are responsible corporate citizens. But everything they have done in their life is guided by their faith and their ethics. Therefore, they are not open on Sunday because they feel their employees have a right to a restful weekend. They pay a very livable wage. They have always had health insurance.

The Supreme Court decision was about religious freedom and whether I, as a private businessperson, am still entitled to that as I carry on commerce in this country.

What has been described—maybe not specifically but negatively—is that Hobby Lobby and the Green family do not appreciate women or their contributions or their rights or their freedoms. Nothing could be further from the truth. They had a very personal objection to four abortifacients—not birth control pills—four medicines, devices that actually kill a living human being. See, what we do not think about very often—and I think about all the time—is that when an egg and a sperm unite, there is created something that has never been created before: a unique human being. The genetic material will be no different at conception than it is when you are 85 years old. It is unique. It has never before been here; it will never again be here.

So based on these deeply held beliefs and ethics—and what I would say is morals—they chose to supply their entire employee network with 16 different methods of birth control. But the four that actually kill a baby that has been formed—they thought it was their religious right to be able to say they should not have to take money out of their pocket to pay for something that goes against their strongly held moral, ethical, and faith beliefs.

So we have had a reaction. It is political in nature. It does not have much to do with the facts. It has a lot to do with darkness, of saying something is so that is not true, and saying it often enough so we can tell people that here are those terrible Republicans and they want to hurt women.

I dedicated 25 years of my life to helping women in every type of tragedy, every type of disease, whether it is cancer or diabetes or hypertension or pregnancy or miscarriages or just the common cold. Before the Senate forced me to stop delivering babies, I was delivering babies that I delivered; in other words, it was the third generation. That is how crazy the Senate ethics rules are.

So the very undercurrent of what we heard could not be further from the truth. What we heard—the implications were that the Green family is somehow this negative corporate monster who wants to take women's rights away—is absolutely untrue.

The other falsehood we hear is that if you do not have health care, you do not have available birth control. We spend \$400 million a year on title 19, most of which is in birth control pills that are given out to women who do not have access. It costs \$7 a month to buy birth control pills, and most physicians, like myself, who had women who could not either access title 19 or who did not have \$7 a month, gave the pills themselves out of their stocks, their samples.

So there is a reality other than what has been painted in the Senate, and I could not sit by and let this hang out, this terrible untruth. I do not know of a family business, I do not know of a business in America that cares more about its employees than Hobby Lobby, and it is manifested through the employee loyalty and also the success of their brand because they really have a team. And you do not have a team if you do not feel as if you are being cared for—that you are not one of the group.

There are a lot of problems in front of this country. But the one described in this last piece of legislation is not one of them. The Green family does not keep anybody from buying abortifacients if they want them. They are not all that expensive. The morning-after pill is over the counter. But to force a person of faith to pay for an action against what they believe is morally wrong. It is far away from the religious liberties our Constitution guarantees.

I know we can get hyped up on emotion, but the emotion we ought to get hyped on is preserving the rights our Founders guaranteed when they started this country. They were based on the same set of beliefs the Green family inculcates into everything they do with Hobby Lobby. It is pretty ironic to me that we have become so post-modern, so smart, so “for” what the government can do and mandate that we are willing to destroy the very freedoms that created this country in the first place.

This bill was a cynical attack on truth. I am glad it is not proceeding. It is time to quit wasting the Senate's time on political games and start addressing the very real problems this country has, such as the fact that Social Security disability will run out of money next month; the fact that one-third of those on disability who are not truly disabled are threatening the livelihood of those who truly are; the fact that Medicare, 17 years from now or 16 years from now, will be out of money; the fact that Social Security will be out of money in 18 years; the fact that we are having corporations leave this country in a mass flood because we

have a Tax Code that is not competitive with the rest of the world; the fact that we are wasting \$250 billion a year on duplicative programs that do not accomplish the goals which the Congress set out for them. Yet we have no leadership that says we are going to address the very real problems in front of the country. It is not a great record to be proud of.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. ISAKSON. I ask to be recognized to speak as if in morning business.

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

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SECOND LIEUTENANT NOAH HARRIS

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I wish to share an experience I had a couple of weeks ago while riding the mountains of North Georgia to my home. I was in the pickup truck alone, driving my red Silverado from a place in the mountains. I spent a lot of time thinking—which I try to do when I get a few moments to myself—about all the difficult positions we are now in as a country. I thought about our border with Mexico and all the Central American children who are coming through, huddled on the border, and the crisis there. I thought about Syria and the tragedy of that civil war. I thought about the fact that the Israelis and Hamas are firing rockets back and forth from Gaza and into the mainland of Israel. I thought about the fact that we are now negotiating with Iran, our archenemy. I thought about the fact that Vladimir Putin decided to take advantage of the vacuum that has been created in world leadership and moved into Crimea, threatening Kiev and threatening Ukraine. I thought about all the crises we have along the way.

Then I came to Ellijay, GA, a little town known for its apples and its population of 2,000 great Georgia citizens.

I came to Poole's Bar-B-Q, which is a landmark along the highway in Ellijay, GA. I stopped, and all of a sudden all those thoughts I had of the wars going on, the conflicts going on, the strife and the trouble going on all culminated in Gilmer County, because in Gilmer County in 2005 I attended the funeral of Noah Harris. Noah Harris was killed in Iraq in 2005.

I thought about his story, and I thought about our position now, and I thought about some message I want to send to my country and to this body of the Senate.

Let me talk about Noah Harris. Noah Harris was a cheerleader at the University of Georgia. On the Saturday before 9/11 in 2001, he was in Sanford Stadium with 92,000 fans of the Georgia Bulldogs cheering on the team.

Then, like the rest of the world, he saw the terrible attack of 9/11 in 2001—in New York City, in Shanksville, PA, and in Washington, DC.

On the morning of the 12th, he got out of bed in the dormitory and he went straight to the Army ROTC building in Athens, GA, and told them he wanted to sign up for an ROTC commission because he wanted to go fight whoever it was who killed those 3,000 citizens of the world tragically in New York City.

They said: Noah, you can't get a commission in just a year. You only have a year left.

He said: I can double up and do it. I want to go for my country. I want to go for what is right. I want to go fight for America.

He became a second lieutenant in the 3rd Infantry Division, and, sure enough, 3 years after that, he was in Iraq. He became known as the Beanie Baby soldier because he had his pockets stuffed with Beanie Babies. And as he would go through Ghazaliya, where he was stationed near Baghdad, he would hand out Beanie Babies to the Iraqi children. He was like a pied piper. Unfortunately, in the 11th month of his tour, a rocket-propelled grenade hit his humvee and he and two of his buddies were killed instantly in Iraq.

I didn't know Noah Harris, but I went to the funeral that day because, as a Senator from Georgia, I wanted to pay my respects to a soldier who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the war on terror.

So as I was riding through Gilmer County a couple weeks ago, thinking about the crises we have today around the world and then thinking about Noah Harris, I thought to myself, there is a message all of us need to remember: Those soldiers should never have died in vain, and we have to make sure they did not.

In Iraq 4,486 American soldiers were killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom. In Afghanistan, to date, 2,319—a total of 6,805—most of them Americans, some of them immigrants seeking their citizenship in America and fighting for America in our Armed Forces—fought for the rights and freedoms that all our Founding Fathers stood for, fought for all the reasons we serve in this body today, fought for all the reasons that America is the great and noble country it is around the world.

But right now there is an absence of leadership in the world, and because of it we are seeing one crisis come up after another. I worry that Noah Harris, who died in Iraq in 2005, might—and I underscore the word "might"—have died in vain if we don't recognize our responsibilities and see to it that we try and prevent what has been happening lately from continuing to happen.

There is a decision point coming to the United States of America—it is coming next year. It is one I want to encourage the President to think about deeply and for all of us to think about deeply.

We have lost Iraq to ISIS. ISIS is a renegade group of terrorists who have basically taken over that country and partnered with some of the terrorists in Syria to control Iraq.

One of the reasons they did that is we left a huge vacuum in Iraq when we pulled out. We pulled every American soldier out. I know it was our goal to leave after the surge worked—and that was the right thing to do. But it wasn't the right thing to pull out every single soldier, because we abandoned all the infrastructure that we had built. We abandoned the image of American strength and power. We abandoned the ability for us to be agile in a dangerous part of the world.

In Afghanistan, we are supposed to pull our troops out at the beginning of next year. Some of them should come home but not all of them. We have invested billions of dollars in American hardware and American money to see to it we had the best support in the world for our soldiers in Afghanistan. If we abandon Bagram, if we abandon Kabul—if we abandon Afghanistan, the same thing will happen in Afghanistan as happened in Iraq. And those soldiers, the 2,319 who died in Afghanistan, will have in part died in vain because we abandoned what they built. We abandoned what they protected. We abandoned the investment they made.

We need also to remember what happened on 9/11 of 2001, when we decided to go into Iraq and then later into Afghanistan. We didn't have enough infrastructure in that part of the world to make an invasion. We had to rent the Kyrgyzstan airport near Russia to be able to fly our troops in to begin positioning outside of the Tora Bora area in Afghanistan.

We have built tremendous infrastructure, we have built tremendous bases, and we have tremendous assets for which the taxpayers of the United States have paid. We should maintain a presence there so we are agile; so our SEALs teams, if needed, can be positioned; so that the rest of the world knows that while the war may be over and America has come home, it hasn't left. It hasn't abandoned us. An American presence will remain—just as we have in Germany, just as we have in Japan, just as we have in South Korea. Our best friends today were our enemies 40, 50, and 60 years ago, because America didn't leave when the fight was over. We need to make sure that relationship happens in Afghanistan so we can begin to build our presence in that part of the world and be that somebody who prohibits and inhibits terrorism and people like ISIS from taking over countries.

Make no mistake about it. Vladimir Putin has been encouraged by an absence of leadership, and ISIS took advantage of an absence of leadership. What is going on between Hamas and Israel in the Gaza Strip is an absence of leadership, in part on our part. We can't sit around and be bystanders. We have to recommit ourselves to the effort in that part of the world because

in the end the peace and security of America from terrorism and from those who would bring us down is not our looking the other way and not living up to our responsibility to the Noah HARRISes of the world who gave the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq in 2005—all because he watched what we all watched that morning of 9/11 in 2001, and said: This shall not stand. I want to volunteer to fight for my country. And he joined our Army and did so.

God bless Noah Harris. God bless his parents, Rick and Lucy. God bless the United States of America. May we remember our responsibility not to leave what we have built and remain a beacon of peace, liberty, and democracy around the world.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I wanted to inform the Members about an important hearing that was held this morning in the Senate Veterans' Committee. I also wish to thank the Members of the Senate who, in the midst of a very partisan environment last month, voted with 93 votes—overwhelming support—to pass a very significant piece of legislation to help the men and women who put their lives on the line to defend our country—legislation that was written by Senator MCCAIN and myself, and I thank him very much for his help in this effort.

One of the important provisions in that legislation was an understanding that the needs of our veterans are a cost of war. They are a cost of war just as much as guns and tanks and planes and missiles are a cost of war. It seems to me to be fairly obvious that if we spend trillions of dollars fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is absolutely appropriate to make sure we have money available on an emergency basis to take care of the men and women who use those guns and tanks and missiles and who put their lives on the line and, in some cases, never come home.

So the first point I wish to make is that if we send people to war, we should always understand that a cost of that war is taking care of our veterans.

I recall—and I see the chairperson of the Appropriations Committee and she will recall this as well—that when this country went to war in Iraq and after in Afghanistan—and let me be clear, I voted against the war in Iraq—but when we went to war in Iraq and in Afghanistan, the understanding was that this is emergency funding; that our troops, no matter how one voted on the

war, needed the equipment to take care of themselves, to protect themselves, and to win the mission. That is exactly where we are today. We want to win this mission. The mission we are involved in now is making sure the men and women who served this country in the military get quality care in a timely manner. That is the mission we have to win now, and that, in my view, is a cost of war.

I think there is not widespread awareness of what the cost of war is, and I hope, A, we never get into more wars in the future, but that if we ever do, people understand that any budget for war must include the needs of veterans—not 2 years after the war but 70 years after the war. When some veteran is sitting in some room in an apartment without legs, without arms, without eyesight, that is a cost of war and we don't desert those people—not tomorrow, not 50 years from now, not 70 years from now. Our moral commitment is to make certain we provide for those who defend us.

I think there is not sufficient understanding about what the cost of war truly is. I wish to mention just a few facts people should understand. Over 2 million men and women served this country in Afghanistan and in Iraq. Studies are very clear that 20 to 30 percent of those men and women have come home with post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury. That is between 400,000 to 500,000 men and women who are coming home with PTSD or TBI. What that translates into is men and women who are struggling every single day. It translates into outrageously high rates of suicide for younger veterans, substance abuse, inability to hold on to a job and earn a living; many of these folks have a difficult time being around people. It translates into divorce. It translates into emotional problems for kids and for other family members.

Since fiscal year 2006, the number of veterans receiving specialized mental health treatment has risen from over 927,000 to more than 1.4 million in fiscal year 2013. Today, and every day, approximately 49,000 veterans are receiving outpatient mental health appointments. Let me repeat that. Today, some 49,000 veterans in 50 States in this country are receiving mental health appointments. That is a staggering number. During the last 4 years, VA outpatient mental health visits have increased from \$14 million a year to more than \$18 million a year. This is just one of the problems facing the veterans community. How do we provide the psychiatrists, the social workers, the psychologists, the counselors we need? It is a huge issue because PTSD and TBI are very tough illnesses.

In addition, what we are looking at now—and every Member of the Senate is familiar with this—is outrageously high waiting periods for veterans to get into the VA. Time and time again I hear from veterans in Vermont and I hear from veterans all over the coun-

try; I hear from veterans organizations and I read independent surveys which tell me that when veterans get into the VA, the quality of the care they get is good. I just met 2 hours ago with a veterans organization—same thing: Once people get into the system, the quality of care is generally good; the problem is accessing the care. The problem is appointments.

I will not read to my colleagues all of the statistics, but trust me the waiting lines all over this country are much too high in many parts of America. There are other people who never even made it to the waiting lines. This has to do with a whole lot of issues that we have discussed.

The bottom line is we must address the waiting time issue and make sure that in the very near future, every veteran who is in need of health care gets that health care in a timely manner.

Sloan Gibson, who is the Acting Secretary of the VA—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is informed that the time is under Republican control, if the Senator would suspend.

Mr. SANDERS. Could I ask my colleague just for 3 more minutes?

Mr. RISCH. The Senator may do so.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, Senator SANDERS is speaking. Senator RISCH, I believe, is going to speak. The time now is on unaccompanied children; am I correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The unanimous consent agreement was that the Republicans control the time until 4:30.

Ms. MIKULSKI. OK.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. I ask unanimous consent that—

Ms. MIKULSKI. I haven't yielded the floor. I reserved my right to object. I am just clarifying. So Senator SANDERS wishes to speak, and as I understand it, I have time—this is not in any way to interfere with the Senator from Idaho, but at 4:30 I am supposed to have the time under the time controlled by the Democrats; is that right?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We already agreed to the unanimous consent request that the Republicans control the time until 4:30.

Ms. MIKULSKI. How much time is—all I am trying to do is know when I am going to be able to speak.

If I could turn to the Senator from Idaho, how long does he intend to speak?

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I intend to speak for about 4½ minutes.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I withdraw my objection. I think we deserve to hear Senator SANDERS, and I will wait patiently for my turn.

Mr. RISCH. I thank the Senator from Maryland.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank very much the Senator from Idaho.

Let me wrap it up by making the point that Acting Secretary Gibson made this morning which was a very simple but important one. What he said is we must address the immediate crisis of ending these outrageously long waiting periods that veterans are now experiencing in order to get into the VA. Right now—and I am proud of what he is doing—they are moving very aggressively to get veterans all over this country into private health care when necessary and any other form of health care, to make sure those waiting periods go down. I think they are doing a pretty good job. They have to continue to do that, but we should be mindful that this is going to be a very expensive process.

The other point he made, which is equally important, is that long term, if the goal is to end these unacceptable waiting periods, we have to give the VA the staffing and the space and the facilities and the infrastructure they need.

He came forward with what I recognize is a very big pricetag. His pricetag was \$17.6 billion, so we can get the 10,000 more staff we need, the doctors, the psychiatrists, the primary health care physicians, the mental health counselors we need, get the space we need, because in many facilities around the country the staff can't operate because they don't have adequate space.

So what I would say to my colleagues, if we are serious about ad-

ressing this very important problem, we will go forward in two ways. No. 1, immediate crisis, let's end those waiting lists. Let's contract out when necessary to private physicians.

Long term, it is absolutely imperative that the VA have the infrastructure it needs so we don't have this crisis again 2 years from today.

The last point, I reiterate. If we send people off to war—if we make that enormously difficult, painful decision—I hope every Member in this body understands that taking care of veterans is a cost of that war and that we have a moral responsibility to do everything we can with them and for them and their families.

Before I yield the floor, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a memorandum submitted by Acting Secretary Sloan Gibson at our committee hearing earlier today.

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

Washington, DC, July 16, 2014.

MEMORANDUM FOR CHAIRMAN SANDERS

From: Sloan D. Gibson, Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Regarding: Testimony at July 16, 2014 Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs Hearing.

Per your request, attached for your information is a summary of additional resource needs through FY2017 that I outlined in my testimony today before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

In developing the resource requirements, the overarching goals were to:

Support the work of the Senate-House conference committee to improve Veterans' access to medical care and services.

Ensure that VA has the resources necessary to deliver timely, high quality care

and benefits to Veterans enrolled in the VA system.

Schedule all Veteran appointments within standards of acceptable care.

Enhance and reform infrastructure that enables VA medical care (i.e. facilities construction/IT improvements) to modernize VA's operations and provide access to care when and where Veterans want it.

Further, the resource requirements were shaped by principles that the Administration believes should be key to any discussion of VA resource needs. These principles include:

Leverage contract care where necessary, but focus efforts on incentivizing improvements in the VA system itself—Consider referrals to non-VA care to address burgeoning workload as a temporary stop-gap to immediately address the current problem, but concurrently look to strengthen the VA system by including incentives and resources for VA to deliver care in-house.

Require cost-effective, coordinated care—Make efficient use of taxpayer dollars by ensuring quality care is delivered in a cost-effective way. Require VA to actively coordinate a Veteran's care across all care environments.

Modernize VA infrastructure and processes—Ensure that VA facilities and IT infrastructure are modernized and equipped to meet increasing demand for services; reform VA IT delivery and procurement to make it more effective in delivering services to Veterans.

Support VA system without undercutting other national priorities—Given that VA is required to provide quality care to Veterans—and faces serious resources needs not contemplated when budget caps were negotiated—funding to support the ramp-up of VA medical care contemplated below must be provided outside of current base discretionary resources.

If you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

VA RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS FACT SHEET

Investments to Address VA Access to Care and Modernize Infrastructure and Processes		
Resource	Cost (\$Billions)	Summary of Use of Funds
Increasing Veterans' System-wide Access to Care.	\$10.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access: \$8.2B for approximately 10,000 primary care and specialty care physicians, and other clinical/medical staff including physicians, nurses, social workers, mental health professionals, and others—and funds other associated expenses such as equipment, supplies, and other overhead costs Hepatitis-C Drugs: \$1.3B for critical new therapies over the next 2 years for higher than expected costs for two new Hepatitis C drug therapies that are significantly more effective and carry fewer side effects Caregivers Program: \$186M is estimated to support higher-than-expected demand for the Caregivers program (over approximately 22,000 Caregivers in total) IT Infrastructure: Additional funding is needed to provide IT support in new space generated by major and minor construction and Non-Recurring Maintenance (NRM). Project Development: Additional funding is needed for the development of OIF programs. These include Interoperable Purchased Care, Mobile App Scheduling, and additional Veterans Benefits Management System & VBA IT development. Other IT Support: Additional funding for IT staff to support operational requirements and for hardware, bandwidth, security, etc.
IT Enhancements	\$1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 700 Minor and NRM projects to include safer inpatient care to eradicate legionella and other threats 8 major construction projects that address safety or access issues
Improve and Invest in VA Physical Infrastructure.	\$6.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for approximately 1700 staff to speed appeals, non-rating benefits workload, and other benefits programs
Veterans Benefits Administration	\$0.4	
Total	\$17.6	

•These resources are needed to ensure that VA is able to deliver high quality, timely health care to Veterans enrolled in the VA.

With that, I yield the floor, and again I wish to thank my friend Senator RISCH for the courtesy of giving me some extra time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I thank the Senator.

(The remarks of Mr. RISCH pertaining to the introduction of S. 2616 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. RISCH. I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time between

now and 5:30 p.m. will be controlled by the majority party.

The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

REFUGEE CRISIS

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, for the next hour a number of us from the Democratic Caucus will be talking about the Central American refugee crisis. We are lucky to be joined by Senator MIKULSKI, the chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, to get us started today. So I look forward very much to hearing what she has to say and you will be hearing from me in a little bit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about an urgent crisis at our border in which over 250 children a week are coming from Central America, fleeing horrific gang violence—horrific gang violence—to seek refuge and asylum in the United States of America.

This is being called a crisis at the border. Well, it is a border crisis, but the crisis actually begins in Central America, where brutal, violent gangs, based on organized crime, are either trying to recruit the boys into organized crime, drug smuggling, human trafficking, or to recruit the girls into human trafficking in other just dangerous and repugnant circumstances.

But when you go to the border the way I have, you will see that the situation is dire. It is dire because, as these children come to the border, crossing the Rio Grande—probably within really almost a 50-mile stretch of the Grande; it is not over the 1,900 miles of the Grande—they come and, actually, they do not try to sneak in, they come right up to where the border control is and they have pieces of paper with their name on it. They are then taken into custody by border control. They are placed into holding cells that are designed for adult males. They were designed to hold drug smugglers, narco-traffickers, and now they hold as many as 20 or 30 or 40 children, while under the law they are to be placed in the hands of the Health and Human Services Agency while their legal and asylum status is being verified.

Well, I am telling you, the entire infrastructure for dealing with these children—from the way the border control is trying to take care of them, the overrunning of the capacity of these holding cells, to the backlog on processing their legal and asylum determination, to really trying to place them in facilities under the care of Health and Human Services—the situation is dire.

The President of the United States has asked for emergency funding to deal with it. I hope we consider this emergency funding. The amount of money the President is seeking is \$3.7 billion. This is to care for the humanitarian needs of the children, the enforcement at the border, the identifying of their legal status under a law passed under the administration of President Bush to deal with the trafficking of children, both boys and girls, and also for robust deterrence in the home countries where these children are coming from. But the deterrence comes from breaking down and prosecuting organized crime syndicates of the smugglers and the traffickers.

We are also asking for money to conduct a massive educational campaign advising Central American families against the dangers and false hopes of this journey. The journey is, indeed, dangerous. They come on foot. They come by car. They ride the tops of a train that is referred to as The Beast. There was one little girl who I spoke to with Secretary Johnson. She had stayed awake for 2 days on the rooftop of a train, terrified that she would fall off and be mutilated, just to be able to make it into the United States of America. And why did she make such a perilous, dangerous journey? It was because they were trying to recruit her into these violent and vile ways.

We need to make sure Central America, with our help, goes after the seven organized crime units that we know are sparking this, that are trying to recruit these kids; giving them false promises too, that if they come to this country, they will be able to get a free pass somehow for getting into this country. We need to be able to stop

this and be able to deal with it in the most effective way.

The President's program actually does outline the money to be able to do that. When the children do come, as I said, while they are awaiting their legal status to be determined, they are placed in the hands of HHS. Now, HHS does not run group homes. HHS does not run foster care. HHS funds it, and they need to be able to turn to local communities to be able to have these children be able to stay.

I saw fantastic work being done while the children were being placed at Lackland Air Force Base and the social services were being run by—under contract of a faith-based organization—the Baptist church. I know the distinguished Presiding Officer knows a lot about human services. I myself am a social worker, and I will tell you that faith-based organization is really running a good program for these kids.

But we are running out of money. We need money for food and shelter for the children. We need money for the border agents. We need money for transportation to shelters and also transportation, when we can, returning these children home. We need money for immigration judges and legal services for the children to determine their asylum status, and, as I said, we need the muscular deterrence in the home country breaking up the organized gangs that then create the violence that then sets these children on this journey.

The best way to make sure the surge of children is stopped is not by harsher immigration laws. It is by making it hard on the drug dealers and the human traffickers, the smugglers, the coyotes. Because they are the ones who are the reason they are coming.

Looking at the data—looking at data—we see that these children are coming not only where there is high poverty, but that children are coming where there is a high level of crime, particularly homicide, murder, and other recruitment of children. These children are almost being recruited by child soldiers in their own country to engage in violent criminal activity.

So we need to be able to look at this emergency supplemental and be able to meet the human needs while the children are here, make sure we fund the judges, the immigration judges and the legal services, to determine their asylum status, and be able to take care of them.

Already, 60,000 unaccompanied children have come into our country during this last year. In the 2 weeks I toured the border, I saw young children as young as 5 with one instruction: Cross the border, turn yourself in, and try to get as safe as you can. Border agents find these children often dehydrated, malnourished, and usually a victim of some type of trauma. Also, they have heard false promises from the smugglers about what it will be when they come here.

These smugglers—as part of these dangerous gangs and cartels—see

women and children as a commodity to be bought, sold, transported, as if they were cargo. Children leave these homes based on lies. They think they are coming to an area where they will never have to go home or that they will be safe. I hope we then pass this appropriations. I hope in passing the appropriations we will be able to protect the safety of the children, we determine their legal and asylum status, and we have this muscular deterrent strategy in the home country.

There are those who want to have a new immigration policy or want to repeal the George Bush law. I would caution that because, remember, our problem is not the children; our problem is what causes the children to come. We have to go after what causes the children to come; and that is the drug dealers, the smugglers, the coyotes, those who are engaging in such violent crime.

The host countries, along with Mexico, need to help deal with this, and we need to marshal our law enforcement resources to be able to help them do this. Now they say: Let's bring in the National Guard at the border. What is our National Guard going to do? When these little kids cross the Rio Grande, they are going to go right up to that soldier, put their arms around his or her leg, and say: I need to be safe. Can you help me? What is the National Guard going to do? It is not a border enforcement problem; it is a criminal gang problem in Central America.

So we need to be able to be sure we are targeting the right areas in order to solve this problem. The children are not the threats. They are coming here because they are threatened themselves. We need to meet these urgent humanitarian needs, and we need to focus on our hemisphere to break up the gangs and crime.

Later on today we are going to have a briefing for every single Senator so they can ask the questions about this situation. Who are the children? Why are they coming? What are their legal rights under the law? But how can we effectively deal with this children's march, where the children are in danger in their host country and on the long journey to this one?

We are also asking that this \$3.7 billion be designated as an emergency.

There are those who will want to take from other domestic programs. I would caution that. In fact, I would object to the very idea. The President has said this is an emergency because under the Budget Control Act of 2011 it meets the criteria that it is sudden, urgent, unforeseen, and temporary, deals with the loss of life, property, or our national security interests. I think it meets that test. I do not want to take offsets from existing programs to do this. It is unexpected. It is significant. We can deal with it, but let's not do it at the expense of other programs designed to help the American family and the American middle class.

I know there are others who want to speak on this issue. I will have more to

say later, but for now let's examine the urgent supplemental and let's really solve the problem at the border and what causes it to be a problem for us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, let me start by thanking my colleague from Maryland for her leadership on the Appropriations Committee and her leadership on this difficult issue. She said something in caucus the other day that really struck me. She said: Every Senator has an opinion on this, but not every Senator has the facts. Facts matter. They make for good policy.

Last week I had the opportunity, along with Secretary Johnson, to visit a temporary facility for refugee mothers and their children that is in my home State of New Mexico. The holding area at this facility in Artesia, NM, is one of several ways that DHS is increasing its capacity to process the increasing number of families with children from Central America who are crossing our southwest border.

On Monday, 40 individuals were repatriated back to Honduras. It is reported that more mothers and their children will be sent back to their countries of origin.

While I was at this facility, I saw firsthand the remarkable interagency effort that it took to take a Federal law enforcement training center, a campus, and turn it into a safe and humane place for families to stay while their cases are being processed.

But that is not all I saw while I was there. I watched a young boy play soccer with his little brother, both of them clearly happy to be in the kind of secure environment where they could just be kids. I saw a lot of mothers. I saw mothers whose faces were worried, who reflected the clear concern about what the future would be for them and for their children. What I did not see at that facility—I did not see cartel mules. I did not see drug runners. I did not see criminals or gang members. Those were mothers and little kids. Most of those families come from one of the most violent regions in the world today.

This current crisis is of grave concern to all of us. I know I have heard from a number of my constituents who wanted to know what they can do to help. I have to give great credit to our local chamber of commerce in Artesia, NM, as they worked hard as they received hundreds of donations from compassionate New Mexicans across the State hoping to make a difference in these people's lives. They understand that this is first a humanitarian crisis. They also understand that we are a nation of laws, that our immigration system has been broken for a long time and needs to be fixed.

The Senate worked for months to address this, but the Republican-led House of Representatives refuses to even debate immigration reform, much

less allow a vote on it. Instead, Republicans claim that the President's immigration policies, including deferred action for childhood arrivals—or DACA, as it is known—caused a crisis at the border. That could not be further from the truth. The increase in unaccompanied children started before President Obama created the DACA program 2 years ago. The United Nations High Commission on Refugees has documented an increased number of asylum seekers from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala since 2009—a full 5 years ago. What is more, children crossing the border would not be eligible for DACA. In fact, they would not be eligible for the Senate version of immigration reform.

These asylum seekers are not only fleeing to the United States but also to the other neighboring countries in the region. They are fleeing to Panama, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Belize. In fact, those countries saw a 712-percent spike in asylum cases from El Salvador, from Honduras, and Guatemala from 2008 to 2013, further demonstrating that children are not coming to the United States to apply for DACA. They are coming because their lives are at risk back home.

In interviews with over 400 children, the United Nations High Commission on Refugees found that no less than 58 percent of them were forcibly displaced because they suffered or faced harm that indicated a potential or actual need for international protection—an increase of more than 400 percent from 2006.

Less than 1 percent of these kids spoke of immigration reform or some new program or policy as the basis for coming to the United States. In fact, out of the 404 children who were interviewed, there were only 4—4 children who expressed a reason for coming that related to some part of the U.S. immigration system.

The reality is, as we heard from Senator MIKULSKI, what is driving children to our borders is unimaginable violence, corruption, extreme poverty, and instability in their home countries.

This picture was taken in Tegucigalpa in Honduras. This is frankly an all-too-common sight in Honduras today. Not only is the poverty unimaginable, but the violence we have seen is like nothing in recent history. Honduras has now the world's highest murder rate, with over 90 murders per 100,000 persons annually. Last year approximately 1,000 young people under the age of 23 in Honduras were murdered—murdered in a nation of only 8 million, 1,000 young people.

In a report published by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, they found that 93 percent of crimes perpetrated against youth in Honduras go unpunished—completely unpunished.

The National Observatory of Violence reported that violent deaths of women increased by 246 percent between 2005 and 2012.

This is all the more unsettling to me because I know firsthand that Hon-

duras did not always look this way. In the 1990s I traveled to Honduras with my wife Julie. We were on our honeymoon. We flew into San Pedro Sula. The only time I felt any fear was trying to drive in a city that moves a lot faster than I do when I try to drive on country roads in New Mexico. But we never had any fear for violence when we were in Honduras. We traveled around the country. We went to many places off the beaten path.

That is very different today. Today San Pedro Sula is a city synonymous with murder.

To understand just how bad it is, you can look at pictures like this one of literally body bags getting ready to go to mass graves from murders happening in these neighborhoods in San Pedro Sula. You can read a recent article in the New York Times by Frances Robles that tells the chilling story of Cristian, an 11-year-old sixth grader from Honduras who lost his father in March after he was robbed and murdered by gangs while working as a security guard protecting a pastry truck. It is kind of hard to imagine needing a security guard to protect a pastry truck. Three people he knows were murdered this year alone, and four others were gunned down on a nearby corner in the span of 2 weeks at the beginning of the year. A girl his age resisted being robbed of the sum of \$5. She was clubbed over the head, dragged off by two men who cut a hole in her throat and stuffed her underwear in it and left her body in a ravine across the street from Cristian's house.

Then there is Anthony, a 13-year-old from Honduras, who disappeared from his gang-ridden neighborhood. His younger brother Kenneth hopped on his green bike to search for him, starting his hunt at a notorious gang hangout in the neighborhood. They were found within days of each other, both dead. Anthony, 13, and a friend had been shot in the head.

Kenneth, age 7, had been tortured and beaten with sticks and rocks. They were among seven children murdered in the La Pradera neighborhood of San Pedro Sula in April alone—in 1 month.

El Salvador and Guatemala are the world's fourth and fifth highest in murders. The Center for Gender and Refugee Studies found that in 2011, El Salvador had the highest rate of gender-motivated killings of women in the entire world. In Guatemala, the Department of State reports widespread human rights problems, including institutional corruption, particularly in the police, in judicial sectors, kidnapping, drug trafficking, execution, and often lethal violence against women.

We have a human crisis at our southern border that requires an immediate but compassionate response. Yet instead of supporting the supplemental which seeks to address the root causes of the crisis and protect these vulnerable children, Republicans are trying to use the crisis to promote fear and their border-enforcement-only agenda.

Recently, a Republican Governor suggested that the President send the National Guard to “secure the border once and for all” and that “the border between the U.S. and Mexico is less secure today than at any time in the recent past.” As I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks, facts are stubborn. This is simply not the case. In fact, the notion that lax border policies are somehow responsible for this latest crisis is not just a myth; it is a, well, full misrepresentation driven by politicians who would rather create a political issue than to solve a very real problem.

The border today is more secure than it has ever been. There are more Border Patrol agents on the ground. There are more resources. There is more technology deployed on the border than at any time in our Nation’s history—at any time. In fiscal year 2012, the Federal Government spent almost \$18 billion—\$17.9 billion—on immigration enforcement. That is \$3.5 billion more than the budgets of all the other Federal law enforcement agencies combined—\$3.5 billion more than the FBI’s budget, plus the DEA’s budget, the ATF budget, plus the Secret Service, plus the U.S. Marshals Service. These resources have made a difference. From fiscal year 2009 to 2012, the Department of Homeland Security seized 71 percent more currency, 39 percent more narcotics, 189 percent more weapons along the southwest border as compared to the last 4 years of the Bush administration.

It is important to remember that this crisis from refugees in Central America is not about children and families sneaking across our border like criminals. As we heard from the Senator from Maryland, many of these refugees seek out the first Border Patrol agent they can find in order to turn themselves in. Many of these children have walked across the border or across the Rio Grande with identification literally safety-pinned to their shirts. But that image does not serve the political interests of those who prefer a border crisis to a refugee crisis.

Let’s step back and remember that the Senate passed a comprehensive immigration bill more than a year ago now—a bill that included incredibly important provisions to further strengthen our border but that would also protect refugee children and crack down on the smugglers and the transnational criminal organizations that are at the root of the current crisis.

Notably, this bill was widely supported by both Democrats and Republicans in the Senate Chamber.

Public support and good economics have not been enough to convince the House leaders to hold a vote on immigration reform, but they cannot turn a blind eye to the current humanitarian crisis along our Nation’s southern border.

Instead of attacking the President, Senate Republicans should work with

them to address the issue, and they should demand that their colleagues in the House act to fix our broken immigration system.

Additionally, passing the \$3.7 billion supplemental sends a clear signal that we are aggressively stemming the flow of children and families from Central America while continuing to treat these refugee children humanely and as required under the law. This situation is an emergency and we need emergency funding.

Our immigrant communities have helped to write the economic, social, and cultural history of America. I know this firsthand. My own father is an immigrant who came to this country as a boy from Nazi Germany in the 1930s.

As a nation we value the twin promises of both freedom and opportunity. Those ideals are important no matter where you are born.

The fact is, our immigration system is broken. Those of us who represent border communities understand the challenge we face, but there are solutions—solutions before us that are pragmatic, bipartisan, and uphold our American values.

I am familiar with the promise America represents for families. I know how hard immigrants work, how much they believe in this country, and how much they are willing to give back to this country.

A small group of faith leaders from New Mexico penned an op-ed in the Albuquerque Journal over the weekend. In sharing their thoughts on this humanitarian crisis they wrote:

While the current situation raises the issues in powerful ways, expressing hatred toward, fear of, or anger with women and children serves nothing to resolve national debate. Rather, it engenders a destructive spirit of mistrust. Let us seek to understand the immigrant’s reasons for coming and to work collaboratively for just and reasonable immigration reform.

I could not agree more with these faith leaders.

It is time to fix our broken immigration system once and for all. Our short-term solution is to approve the President’s emergency supplemental request now, and as part of our long-term solution we need House Republicans to put the Senate’s immigration reform bill on the floor for a vote.

Our Nation will be the better for it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. I rise today to speak about the ongoing humanitarian crisis on our southern border. I thank my colleagues, Senator HEINRICH and Senator MIKULSKI, for their eloquent words in speaking to this issue.

As a woman and as an immigrant, my heart breaks for these children. My mother fled Japan, where I was born. She fled out of desperation to escape a terrible marriage. I came with her to this country as a young girl, and I remember how uncertain I was about what was in store for me.

Although we came by boat in steerage, at least we traveled safely and to-

gether. We did not face the kind of danger as did these children who are risking everything to be here. Their journeys to our border are lined with smugglers and traffickers. Children are arriving injured and malnourished. Yet they continue to come, not only to the United States but to other nearby countries, fleeing their countries out of desperation.

These children don’t care about the DREAM Act or the Senate immigration reform bill. They are terrified of the violence, abuse, and death in their home countries. Young girls, who represent about 40 percent of the children who arrived this year, often face sexual assault and rape.

Let me share some recent stories from young girls who are fleeing. One girl fled an area of El Salvador controlled by gangs. Her brother was killed for refusing to join a gang that tried to forcibly recruit him. She was raped by two men and became pregnant as a result. She fled El Salvador and was attacked on her journey to the United States.

Another girl was kidnapped by a gang in Honduras that attempted to traffic her into prostitution. She escaped and reported the kidnapping to the police. The gang then abducted her again, raped her, and burned her with cigarettes. She fled to the United States and is seeking asylum.

Yet another girl fled El Salvador when she was 8 years old. Gang members had kidnapped her two older sisters. The girl’s mother did not want her 8-year-old daughter to suffer the same fate, so she arranged for her daughter to be brought to the United States.

These are horrific stories. It is clear that something needs to be done.

I have worked with my colleague Senator MENEDEZ to introduce a comprehensive plan to address this issue. The plan aims to curtail trafficking and smuggling, contain the violence and discord in Central America, and ensure that these children have access to legal assistance and are in safe and humane conditions when they arrive.

This Friday I will also take some of my colleagues to McAllen and San Antonio, TX, to view facilities housing these children during the processing and removal process. We will see for ourselves the conditions that these children are in and meet with officials and leaders on the ground.

This crisis clearly demonstrates that inaction is not an option with regard to these children.

I urge my colleagues to support the supplemental funding needed for our country to meet their humanitarian needs. We have a responsibility to ensure that those in our custody are treated according to our values as a nation, and the President’s request will allow our government to keep these commitments.

I would also urge my colleagues to reject the idea that the solution is to speed up the deportation of these children back to the dangerous conditions

they fled. Stripping away basic legal protections for children in these terrible situations will not solve this problem. As Senator HEINRICH so eloquently showed us, the conditions in their home countries are truly horrific.

To really address this situation, we need to do more work with our partners in the region to reduce violence and improve opportunities in their home countries. We must provide resources so that we can safely, fairly, and timely process these children, including asylum determination, as provided by law.

We should all look to our conscience in seeking a path forward. Surely we can do better than sending these children back to the horrific conditions that they are escaping. Out of sight is not out of mind. That is not what our country stands for.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support the President's supplemental request, and I urge my colleagues to work together toward resolving the underlying process of this crisis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am very honored to follow my colleague from Hawaii and her eloquent and powerful remarks, as well as the Presiding Officer from New Mexico, who knows much firsthand about this issue and has really been a leader in this body for me and others. I thank the Presiding Officer for that leadership.

My view of this issue concerning the tens of thousands of young children making the difficult and dangerous journey to the United States from lands where they face violence and oppression is shaped by my meeting with some of them in my home State of Connecticut.

I had the opportunity to do so recently on a number of occasions, and it has deeply affected my own approach because what I have seen in them really inspires me. It inspires me because I understand better the reasons they have come here. The reasons they have come relate to the violence, the threat of torture, and the oppression they see in the lands they are leaving. They are coming here, many of them, for family reunification.

What struck me in speaking with these young children is they are coming here to reunify with relatives: their moms and dads, their aunts and uncles. They have come to be with members of their family and, of course, to seek education. They desperately want to go to school, and they want the opportunity simply for the freedom they see this country as epitomizing and embodying, the beacon of opportunity that drew so many of our forebears to this country, the lamp that is lit above the harbor of New York symbolically for all Americans, and the ideals this country embodies for the world. That is the reason people come and why our

relatives, our own families came—one generation ago for me and perhaps more generations ago for others here.

So what we face is, in fact, a humanitarian crisis. It is a refugee crisis of children seeking asylum, family reunification, and escape from oppression, torture, and death in intolerable conditions in their home countries.

There is gang warfare that is a result of drug trading, pushed from Colombia to Central America to service better their customers in the United States. Their markets are here. This country provides the demand that fuels the trade—not only this country, of course, but all around the world.

But these children are the innocent victims of the warfare—gang warfare, market warfare that is fueled by a drug trade they have nothing to do with inciting or spurring. They are truly innocent victims.

The values this country embodies that drew them and drew our ancestors and our forebears to come are the values we must now remain true to serving. Among them is the ideal of due process and fairness to justice.

To say simply that we will deport all of them en masse, ask no questions, and put them on a bus really is a disservice to those values and ideals that this Nation embodies for the world—a source of our power in dealing with the world. Our power is not the result only of our air superiority, our great naval fleet, our brave warriors on the ground. It is truly the ideal that our military service and our military might serves to safeguard around the world.

Speaking of security, safety, and safeguarding our Nation, our border is secure, more secure than ever before—perhaps not perfectly secure—and more has to be done for border security, which immigration reform would help to accomplish.

The President has utilized an unprecedented level of resources in terms of both boots on the ground and advanced technology. There is no evidence to indicate any breakdown in border security.

What we have on our border is not a situation involving huge numbers of immigrants slipping into this country surreptitiously; they are coming here openly, surrendering themselves to authorities or being immediately apprehended by law enforcement.

This situation is entirely consistent with a fully effective border security apparatus.

If the current situation were caused by lack of policies in the United States, we would expect to see a large number of immigrant children only in this country. After all, the United States' policies apply only to the United States' borders but, in fact, that is not what we see. There are children seeking asylum and refugee status in many other Western Hemisphere countries—including some of the poorest in the world—a documented 712 percent increase in asylum seekers from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala since 2009.

We have seen no increase in illegal immigration from Mexico, which also would be happening if it were simply lax border security. Any way you look at the situation, the facts simply do not support the theory that America's border is in crisis. It is Central America that is in crisis—El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras are the sources of this humanitarian crisis.

Rolling back the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act will not solve a border problem and it will not uphold the values and ideals of this Nation. The protections of this law in fact are central to ensuring the United States of America does not send innocent children into situations where they would be harmed and killed.

So I would oppose a wholesale rollback of this law. We have to make sure that we do what is right and get this situation right, because the stakes are so very high. No one in this Chamber wants to be responsible for sending one child to their death because we failed to consider the complexity and provide the humanity this situation demands.

Not only would rolling back the Trafficking Victim Protection Reauthorization Act do harm—and we must first do no harm—but it would also hurt law enforcement. This act helps enforcement and our law enforcement authorities to gain crucial actionable intelligence about trafficking. This law reflects the fact that I learned during my law enforcement career, one of the keys to putting criminals behind bars is working closely with victims. In fact, victims are essential, their cooperation is vital to making the law enforceable and making sure it is enforced.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act encourages victims of trafficking to turn themselves in and cooperate with Border Patrol agents, and provide U.S. law enforcement with the information they need. They are not interested in arresting children. They want to arrest the traffickers, the drug lords, the top of the chain. That is so very important for our colleagues to understand.

The surge in drug trafficking and drug-related violence that has turned so many communities into war zones is driven by those gangs in Central America that are in turn driving also the flood of young children to this country. We have this crisis in common with them. It is a humanitarian crisis and a law enforcement challenge. Let us move toward immigration reform which will help to address that crisis by increasing border security, by enabling millions of people now in the shadows to have a path to earned citizenship, to make sure our values and ideals are upheld by the greatest Nation in the history of the world.

I thank all my colleagues who spoke today, and most especially thank Senator LEAHY and Senator FEINSTEIN for their decades of committed work on this issue. I look forward to working with them, the Presiding Officer, and

the majority leader, who has led this Chamber and this Nation so well on this issue.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 2244

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks tomorrow, Thursday, July 17, 2014, the Senate proceed to consideration of S. 2244, as provided under the previous order; that the debate time with respect to the bill and consideration of amendments in order to the bill be modified as follows: Coburn No. 3549, 30 minutes equally divided; Vitter No. 3550, 20 minutes equally divided; Flake No. 3551, 10 minutes equally divided; and Tester No. 3552, 30 minutes equally divided; further, that any remaining time until 12 noon be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that at noon the Senate proceed to votes in relation to the amendments as provided under the previous order; that upon disposition of the Tester amendment, the bill be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill, as amended; further, that there be 2 minutes equally divided prior to each vote and all after the first vote be 10 minutes, with all other provisions of the previous order remaining in effect.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF JULIE E. CARNES TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed now to executive session to consider Calendar No. 849.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Julie E. Carnes, of Georgia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there is a cloture motion at the desk on this nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the

Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Julie E. Carnes, of Georgia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Patty Murray, Elizabeth Warren, Charles E. Schumer, Jack Reed, Christopher A. Coons, Dianne Feinstein, Angus S. King, Jr., Benjamin L. Cardin, Mazie Hirono, Richard Blumenthal, Amy Klobuchar, Christopher Murphy, Cory A. Booker, Martin Heinrich.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF ANDRE BIROTTE, JR. TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 851.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Andre Birotte, Jr., of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there is a cloture motion at the desk that I ask to be reported.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Andre Birotte, Jr., of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Jack Reed, Tim Kaine, Angus S. King, Jr., Thomas R. Carper, Bill Nelson, Jon Tester, Patty Murray, Claire McCaskill, Benjamin L. Cardin, Mark Begich, Sheldon Whitehouse, Elizabeth Warren, Debbie Stabenow, Tom Harkin, Tom Udall.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF ROBIN L. ROSENBERG TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 852.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Robin L. Rosenberg, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. There is a cloture motion at the desk, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Robin L. Rosenberg, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Jack Reed, Tim Kaine, Angus S. King, Jr., Thomas R. Carper, Bill Nelson, Jon Tester, Patty Murray, Claire McCaskill, Benjamin L. Cardin, Mark Begich, Sheldon Whitehouse, Elizabeth Warren, Debbie Stabenow, Tom Harkin, Tom Udall.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF JOHN W. DEGRAVELLES TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

Mr. REID. I now to move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 854.