

and follow a different path in life, we did what most every one of us would do. We told her to take a few years to make up her mind. Unfortunately, that didn't work and now she is making plans for the next chapter of her life.

She will be spending more time with her family, especially her grandchildren. She has already shown she is a very special—in fact, a spectacular—grandmother. I know her family will enjoy having her take a more active role in their lives.

I know she will continue to make a difference helping others and she will continue to be a great gift for all who know her and for all those she is soon to meet. I don't think Diana and I have ever met someone who is more focused or determined to help others. For Robin every day that is spent making life easier for someone else is a good day.

We are all sorry to see Robin close this chapter of her life, but we know she is doing it for all the right reasons. She said she had reached a point in her life when it seemed to be a time to try something new. We will miss her wealth of resources, knowledge, skills, and abilities that cannot be replaced. Over the years she has set such a high mark of excellence. Her achievements, the milestones she established in my office for outstanding effort and accomplishment, and her determination to make Wyoming a better place to live from one corner to the other will be the legacy of her service to the Senate, to the people, the State of Wyoming, and to our Nation.

In the years to come, each member of my staff will take away a different favorite memory of working with Robin. For my chief of staff it will always be the way in which she brought a solution with her to any discussion of any problem. For others it will be the way she would always find a way to handle an issue no matter how difficult or perplexing or how she seemed to not only be familiar with someone's issue, she also seemed to know almost everyone who was involved. For my part, I will always remember how much it meant to me to know I could ask her to take on an assignment and leave it with her knowing it would be done well. She always found a way to do what was needed and expected and then some more.

Perhaps her greatest gift is her ability to effectively manage time and resources. For Robin it is not a problem if there is only 24 hours in a day because she makes the best use of every minute of every hour.

Good luck, Robin, and may God continue to bless you and all those who come into your life in the years to come. You will be missed, but we will know where to find you. It is good to know you will never be more than a phone call away. We hope you fully enjoy your retirement.

You have earned it and then some.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Thank you, Madam President.

I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized to speak for up to 10 minutes in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

SANCTIONS IN VENEZUELA

Mr. RUBIO. Thank you, and I know Senator MENENDEZ is going to speak on this topic as well. We intended to come to the Senate floor and offer a unanimous consent agreement to pass sanctions in Venezuela. First of all, let me thank the White House for what they announced yesterday: sanctions against human rights violators and corrupt government officials in Venezuela who have been involved for a very long time—but especially since the 4th of February—in grotesque human rights violations against young people and all people in Venezuela.

It is a topic that is not often talked about unfortunately these days, given all the issues that are going on around the world. What is happening in Venezuela in our own hemisphere is startling.

First, you have the complete erosion of democracy which has been going on since the reign of Hugo Chavez and now with Nicolas Maduro it has gotten progressively worse. We have been seeing this and talking about this since earlier this year, when thousands of young people in Venezuela took to the streets to protest what was happening and they were met with some of the most brutal attacks we have seen in this hemisphere for quite a while. We documented that on the floor consistently.

So beginning from that moment forward, we have worked in this body to seek sanctions against those individuals, against the people responsible for those human rights violations who also happened to be, by the way, incredibly corrupt. I would go so far as to say that almost every major political figure in Venezuela today in the ruling party is corrupt. It is absolutely amazing how these individuals in charge of government in that country are systemically stealing the funds of the Venezuelan people, and the cases are extraordinary.

There are times, for example, when the President of that country—who, by the way, was elected in an illegitimate election—is benefiting from the currency exchange rate and manipulating that, top-level members of his Cabinet are skimming off the top of the country's oil company and pocketing money, and what is even more outrageous about that is that they and the people who surround them in the private sector are taking those funds and investing them and enjoying them here in the United States of America.

So I felt for a very long time—as have my colleagues—that this was an important issue that needed to be addressed, and it needed to be addressed

by sanctioning those individuals and we have named many of them. So yesterday the White House announced that many of these individuals will now be denied visas to travel to the United States. In fact, just yesterday a government official from Venezuela who was headed here toward America was not able to come because of these visa sanctions.

So we are grateful for that, and we are grateful for the administrations' implementation of this. But while we are grateful for the denial of visas, it does not go far enough. We also need to sanction their assets. That is why earlier this year I, in conjunction with the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and Senators NELSON, MCCAIN, and KIRK proposed legislation to authorize both visa restrictions and also financial sanctions against these individuals, and we have been extraordinarily patient in working through the process to ensure that happens.

The ranking member of the committee, the Senator of Tennessee Mr. CORKER had initial reservations about it, and they were legitimate reservations, and as a result the chairman was kind and wise enough to hold a hearing where we heard testimony about the reality on the ground in Venezuela.

We then proceeded to vote on this in the committee, and the committee voted and approved it by a vote of 13 to 2, if I recall correctly, and that happened on May 22.

Then we patiently worked with our colleagues to try to bring this to the floor, understanding that with all the issues going on it would be difficult to schedule a rollcall vote on it, but we would try to pass it by a process in the Senate we call unanimous consent, where we ask all of our colleagues to approve it and we worked patiently to do that. While he had initial reservations earlier this week, Senator CORKER lifted those reservations and I thank him for that and the way he has taken this so seriously and his cooperation in that matter.

My intention this evening was to come to the Senate floor and ask for unanimous consent of this body to pass this resolution, but some of my colleagues expressed concern about some of the costs that are potentially embedded in this. Let me explain those costs for point of clarification. There were two, in general.

The first was a \$15 million funding for a democracy program in Venezuela, which I believe is a worthy endeavor. But for purposes of overcoming those objections and getting this done, I agreed, and I think the other sponsors did as well, that we would be willing to suspend that in an effort to get this accomplished.

The second is a little bit more nebulous. The second describes administrative costs basically for identifying these assets and implementing the sanctions. The costs are not unique to this. They are not real costs in the way you and I would think of costs. You

don't have to write an additional check or borrow money from China to pay for it. It is the same thing that you would have to do if the President had announced these sanctions, which he has the power to do.

What we did as a result of that is we looked at it. The total cost of it is between \$6 and \$8 million, even though that number is probably not that high, but it would basically involve identifying the individuals and identifying the assets they have that we could sanction. There was concern about that. We were willing to find an additional measure to sunset the implementation of these sanctions in 2016 to lower the costs even further, and yet we still heard there might be some objections. Over the last few minutes, however, and in consultation with the Senator from Oklahoma, we have tried to craft what I believe we hope we can arrive at in the next hours, a solution to this problem that assuages his concern and allows us to get this done.

So in the interest of trying to achieve it in that manner, I am going to withhold asking unanimous consent today for purposes of hopefully arriving at that agreement over the next few hours or early tomorrow morning so we can attempt to get this done in a way that achieves what we are trying to do.

This is critically important.

I point out for purposes of my point of comparison, the Senate in April approved a bill which I supported—and I am glad we did—that authorized virtually identical sanctions against human rights violators in Ukraine. That bill authorized \$50 million for funds for the Democracy Program. That bill authorized \$100 million in security assistance and visa and financial sanctions on human rights violators. In implementing the sanctions in the Ukrainian human rights bill, the cost was \$10 million. None of those funds, by the way, were offset in the way that term is used here. There was no objection to that. There was no objection to that. By the way, the total cost of that bill was \$160 million. This bill that is before us is much more modest in its implications, and I would argue that the costs—at the end of the day, while it has what we call around here a CBO score, the costs are not real. It is basically what they would have to do anyway.

We are looking for language that assures our colleagues who are rightfully concerned about the debt and deficit but also addresses the grotesque human rights violations occurring in Venezuela today.

I will yield to the Senator from New Jersey in a moment, who has shown extraordinary leadership on this and every single issue involving democracy and human rights issues in this region and around the world.

I know there are things going on in the Middle East that are of critical importance to our country. I know there are things going on vis-a-vis Russia

and Ukraine that are of extraordinary importance to our country. But I hope people understand that what is happening in Venezuela matters too because even as we speak, there are millions of people in that country whose rights are being systematically violated.

Just this week the majority regime began a show trial against Mr. Leopoldo Lopez, a popular opposition leader, a mayor of one of the municipalities there. Do you know what his only crime was? Urging Venezuelans to demand a constitutional and peaceful solution to President Maduro's violent repression of demonstrations.

In case anyone needs to understand the true nature of the Venezuelan regime, it is not just human rights violations or corruption or the fact that the cronies of the Maduro administration parade up and down the streets of South Florida bragging about their ill-earned gains without consequence. Venezuela projects itself as a defender of every single human rights-violating country on the planet. Anytime there is a vote on Iran or Assad in Syria or on any human rights violation, you can count on Venezuela's Government being on the side of the human rights violator—every single time. Just recently we have seen them again repeatedly pronounce themselves in opposition to Israel and Israel's right to defend itself.

On top of everything else, we are not just sanctioning corruption and human rights violations; we are sanctioning individuals who at every opportunity they get seek to undermine the national security and the national interests of our country.

So I think this is a worthy endeavor, and my hope is that tomorrow when the Senate gets into session we can reach a conclusion on this item and achieve it. I think it would be critically important as we go into August to show that the Senate made progress in this endeavor. The House has its own version of sanctions that are different from ours. That will have to be reconciled. But I think passage of this in the next few hours will send a powerful message to the people of Venezuela that the people of America, speaking through our Senate, are firmly on their side and for their aspirations for freedom and liberty and on the side of human rights.

Madam President, I will yield the floor now for the Senator from New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 4 minutes.

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I thank my distinguished colleague from Oregon for his courtesy in allowing me to do so.

I agree with everything my colleague from Florida Senator RUBIO has said

about this issue, and I appreciate his leadership alongside with us. He has been following Venezuela intimately. So many people in the State of Florida have exiled there, and so he personally understands this issue and he has been a tremendous champion.

Since February of this year, hundreds of thousands of Venezuelan citizens have protested about the lack of security from rampant crime and violence and an inflation rate that is the highest in the world and a scarcity of food and basic consumer goods that has become part of their daily lives. But instead of listening to the legitimate concerns of its people, the Government of Venezuela has responded with a deplorable display of force and brutality that was seen around the world. To date there have been more than 40 deaths, more than 50 documented cases of torture, and more than 2,000 unlawful detentions.

In May of this year Human Rights Watch released a report on these human rights violations. The report documented how Venezuelan security forces systematically violated the rights of students, women, men, members of the political opposition, and journalists. They said they did so "to punish people for their political views."

Last week the Venezuelan Government opened its show trial against opposition leader and prisoner of conscience Leopoldo Lopez. After spending 5 months in a military prison just for speaking his mind, Mr. Lopez and his attorney were barred from presenting any evidence in his defense—none. No defense allowed.

If that were not enough, we saw that recent events showed that the Venezuelan Government is even willing to threaten regional stability to get its way.

Last week law enforcement officials in Aruba picked up Hugo Carvajal, the former head of the Venezuelan military intelligence and an individual who was designated as a drug kingpin by the U.S. Department of Treasury back in 2008. When indictments were unsealed last week, the world saw evidence of how a senior Venezuelan Government official was deeply involved in the international drug trade, allowing traffickers to operate freely in Venezuelan territory and even coordinating drug shipments himself.

When this official was arrested, what did the Venezuelan Government do? It threatened to cut off flights from Venezuela to Aruba and Curacao. It threatened to end a contract with Curacao's oil refinery, and it moved naval vessels into the waters surrounding these islands. In short, it resorted to every form of blackmail and coercion at its disposition until the Dutch Government released Mr. Carvajal.

We should be clear that democracy has had its opportunity. In recent months foreign ministers from across South America and the Vatican have attempted to mediate dialogue between

President Maduro and his allies and the political opposition, and they have not been able to accomplish it.

It is time to move more vigorously forward with the types of sanctions and other efforts envisioned in the other legislation I and Senator RUBIO have offered, and if we do that tomorrow we will send a message to the hemisphere and to the people of Venezuela that, in fact, they have a real opportunity to have their voices heard, and we will stand on the right side of human rights and democracy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I ask to speak as if in morning business.

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

OREGON WILDFIRES

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, at this moment in my home State of Oregon 500,000 acres are ablaze. Sometimes it is hard to get your hands around numbers, particularly large numbers, so I will give a sense of this. If you were to add up all of the fires in Oregon and if they were in one place, it would cover an area roughly 20 miles by 40 miles. That is an enormous section of a State to be aflame.

Because there are so many devastating fires at once, crews are coming from all over to help with all kinds of aircraft and all kinds of hotshot crews. They are doing all they can, but it is not just Oregon that has fires; other States have fires too. There are over 250,000 acres ablaze in Washington State to the north in a single fire. I believe it is the largest single fire in Washington State's history.

As a result of fires in Oregon and fires in Washington and other fires, we are draining our fire funds at an expansive rate, and thus we have a big problem: We are running out of funds to pay for fighting these fires.

Tonight we had before our Chamber an emergency supplemental bill to provide 615 million more dollars to fight fires this season across the United States of America. A procedural tactic was used to kill this bill. Quite frankly, that is enormously shortsighted.

Here is what has been happening in the past: The fires are being fought, and then the funds run out, and then the Forest Service has to pull the funds from every other department—from departments involving forest health, from departments providing efforts to prevent fires and create conditions in which they will not happen in the future. We are continuing a vicious cycle of robbing fire prevention and forest management funds to fight emergency fires, and that cycle will go forward now that we have failed to pass this emergency supplemental up front.

I will give a little flavor of what I am talking about across our State. We have the Ochoco complex east of Post, 10,000 acres aflame. The Logging Unit

complex northwest of Warm Springs, 6,600 acres; the Kitten Canyon complex west of Vale, 23,000 acres; the Bridge 99 complex north of Sisters, 5,700 acres; the Hurricane Creek fire southwest of Joseph, 900 acres; we have the Buzzard complex in southeast Oregon, nearly 400,000 acres; the Reeves Creek complex southwest of Grants Pass, 200 acres; the China Cap fire east of La Grande, 200 acres—by the way, zero percent contained—the Black Rock fire east of Antelope, 36,000 acres; the Snipion fire north of Fossil, 12,000 acres; and the Bingham complex east of Marion Forks, 450 acres. We also have two more fires that have just arisen, and those are the Haystack complex, 1,700 acres, and the Salt Creek fire northwest of Medford 100 acres.

Here is the thing. We have the conditions for more fires to come—more lightning, a forecast of more hot weather, and we have incredibly dry timber on the floor of the forest.

This situation in which these fires are going to be fought—by pulling funds from every other part of the Forest Service—is unacceptable. It is not good stewardship of the complex operations that occur within the Interior Department and within the Forest Service.

Think about the need to plan the timber harvest to sustain the lumber industry. That is a complex process. It involves a lot of folks who have to go out and evaluate the forests and work it out so those timber sales can occur on schedule. All of that gets stopped when you have to rob the fund in order to pay for fighting these fires.

Let's think about the millions of acres of second-growth forest that are overgrown. It is very good for disease, it is very good for fires, and it needs to be thinned, but how do you plan for the thinning if you rob the funds to do so? The list goes on and on and on.

I am deeply disappointed and frustrated with what happened tonight, and I urge my colleagues to exercise a little thoughtfulness, a little wisdom, and a little stewardship regarding our national forest. The next time this comes up, let's pass it unanimously so we can provide the funds that are needed to fight this national emergency.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

JUSTICE FOR ALL REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, last week I came to the floor to talk about the FBI's extensive use of flawed evidence in thousands of cases. It is tragic just days later there is yet another scandal involving bad science used to send people to jail and some to death row.

According to an internal investigation by the FBI and the Department of Justice, nearly 2,600 convictions and 45 death row cases from the 1980s and 1990s may have involved flawed forensic evidence. Specifically, these cases involved microscopic hair matches, a

form of forensic science that has been discredited. The scope of this scandal, which is the focus of a front-page article in the Washington Post yesterday, goes well beyond the problems we have previously seen when it comes to forensic evidence. Even more troubling than the statistics outlined in the Post's story is that the FBI, after recognizing these egregious mistakes, stopped their full review after examining just a small fraction of these cases. The Department of Justice has rightly ordered the FBI to resume its internal review, but the FBI's conduct is inexcusable.

Once again, we are reminded that our criminal justice system is not infallible and that we are all less safe when the system fails. FBI investigators should have redoubled their efforts to uncover these mistakes and rushed to tell those affected defendants. Instead it appears they dragged their feet and stopped their review. I intend to get to the bottom of this. I have a lot of questions for the Bureau, and I will not stop until they are answered.

When we have evidence that could prove that someone is innocent, we must get it processed immediately. It is not only the right thing to do for that person wrongfully accused but it is the right thing to do to keep our communities safe. That is why I again urge the Senate to take up and pass the Justice for All Reauthorization Act, a bill I introduced with Senator CORNYN last year. This bipartisan legislation includes the Kirk Bloodsworth Post Conviction DNA Testing Grant Program, named for the first person exonerated from a death row crime through the use of DNA evidence. This program seeks to correct these most grievous mistakes. Senate minority leader MITCH MCCONNELL is a cosponsor of the bill. All Senate Democrats support passage of this legislation. There is no reason why the Senate should not take up and pass this important bill without further delay.

I also will continue my efforts to pass commonsense forensic science reform legislation. The Criminal Justice and Forensic Science Reform Act that I introduced earlier this year with Senator CORNYN would improve the use of forensic science in criminal cases and ensure that labs throughout the Nation are operating according to the highest scientific standards.

I thank the many law enforcement, victim services, and criminal justice organizations that continue to highlight the need for reform to ensure the proper application of forensic evidence in criminal cases, and who have urged the Senate to pass the Justice for All Reauthorization Act.

I ask that the Washington Post article by Spencer Hsu be printed in the RECORD, and I urge all Senators to join me in getting to the serious business of providing justice to the wrongfully convicted and passing the Justice for All Reauthorization Act.

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