

they pay attention to the time on their visas and they go back to their country when the time is up.

Third, it authorizes but doesn't require the administration to waive a nonimmigrant visa waiver requirement only if Israel meets all the other program requirements.

Here is what is important. There are 38 countries in the Visa Waiver Program. These countries represent some of America's closest allies. In fact, 20 of the current Visa Waiver Program countries are NATO allies. So I want to say clearly to my friend Senator SESSIONS and anyone within the sound of my voice that the provision I hope he will not object to today, the provision gives Israel, the strongest ally of the United States in the Middle East, a chance to join the program. As a member of the Visa Waiver Program, Israeli citizens, many of whom have families in America, would be allowed to visit the United States for up to 90 days without first obtaining a visa. This deepens the ties between our nations.

I want to read some of the countries that have these privileges: Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Slovakia, Estonia, the Czech Republic. I was proud to support them, but I am also proud to say that Israel deserves to be on that list. Why shouldn't they have the same opportunity?

When we first wrote our visa waiver provision, there were objections that we didn't have enough flexibility. We changed it and now we have 81 sponsors on this legislation. I would ask, how many pieces of legislation have 81 co-sponsors? You couldn't even get it for a Mother's Day resolution. I mean this is strong. And of all the times for us to object to this United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act, it should not be today.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 492, S. 2673; that the bill be read a third time and passed; and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Reserving my right to object, I appreciate Senator BOXER's leadership on this issue. She is a great advocate and a strong supporter of Israel, as I am, and have been consistently since I have been in the Senate.

I would note for the Senator that the expansion of this program has been problematic for some time. I have been involved with the Visa Waiver Program for quite a number of years. So my concern is not based on Israel, it is based on trying to maintain consistency and effectiveness of the program.

It is not a program that I think is operating effectively. Congress has declared that no more waivers be granted until after this biometric exit system has been completed. I believe our House colleagues are considering a bill

that is very similar to what Senator BOXER and others are supporting but it does not include this provision.

Based on that, I am not able to support this amendment and would object.

Mr. President, if the Senator would allow me, I would say let's pass a bill without that provision in it. Let's get that done today, and I will commit to further research and digging into this to see if there is any legitimate way based on law and consistency and the integrity of the visa waiver system that I could support it. It might be. Israel is an educated country. We have a lot of people who travel back and forth between our countries. It is just so far the State Department has not approved it. The House does not have it in their bill, and I and the Members of the Judiciary Committee who have dealt with these issues for quite a number of years—I have resisted the expansion of this program contrary to the law and State Department policy. Regretfully I have objected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I won't be long, but I am so disappointed. I know my friend wants to be helpful, but I have to say that the visa waiver section—I am not being stubborn about this—all it does is it says that Israel should have the same privileges as Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and the Czech Republic.

Of all the days to say no to this bill, with what is going on over there. It hurts my heart. It breaks my heart, because this bill authorizes \$200 million in the value of U.S. weapons sales in Israel to a total of \$1.8 billion. It is a stockpile that is intended to be used by U.S. forces, but in event of emergency, Israel can tap that. And, my God, this is an emergency. It is so critical. In fact, just last week the United States provided Israel with ammunition from the stockpile after Israel requested help to replace its depleted supplies.

We shouldn't be waiting another hour to pass this, and here we are as the clock ticks down and we go off on our break and as my friend knows, this bill doesn't cost one slim dime—not one slim dime—not one penny. It is such a signal to Israel that we stand with her.

It also has an energy section where we help Israel develop her natural gas supplies to become energy independent. It is so sad for me today.

Last night Senator CORKER had an objection. He cleared it. He and I had a real go-to on it. I know we had a bit of a misunderstanding. He backed off. I am so appreciative. Then Senator COBURN had a problem, and he backed off and he said, "No, I kind of like this section." Then Senator LEE had a problem and Senator COBURN talked to Senator LEE and Senator LEE was fine.

We have 81 people on this bill, and 1 Senator this afternoon is holding it hostage because he doesn't like the program. Well, we can all work together on the program, but why single

out Israel because you don't like the program? Let this go.

We can have a colloquy. We can work together, Senator SESSIONS. We can make sure there is no abuse here. We changed this so we would be sure there is no abuse.

I am very saddened at this, and all I can say is that Senator BLUNT and I are coming back with this bill over and over and over again, and one way or the other we will get it done.

I say to my friends in Israel: Take heart. Eighty-one of our Senators are with you on this bill, and only a handful haven't even gone on, and only one—only one—objected. So take heart, because we are with you and we will get this done.

Mr. President, that is the end of my remarks, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, if it would be more convenient for you to come to the desk, I am happy to sit in the Chair.

Since the Presiding Officer can't answer my question, I will note 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. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BOXER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES RELATING TO CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES INTENDED TO AFFECT ELECTIONS—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. REID. Madam President, is the motion to proceed to S.J. Res. 19 now pending?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to proceed is pending.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Madam President, I have a cloture motion that I ask be reported.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read 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 motion to proceed to Calendar No. 471, S.J. Res. 19, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to

the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Tom Udall, Debbie Stabenow, Christopher Murphy, Christopher A. Coons, Charles E. Schumer, John D. Rockefeller IV, Maria Cantwell, Patty Murray, Dianne Feinstein, Bill Nelson, Tom Harkin, Richard J. Durbin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Al Franken, Amy Klobuchar.

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

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

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed occur on Monday, September 8, when the Senate resumes legislative session following confirmation of the Pryor nomination.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

BORDER CRISIS

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I wish to express my bitter disappointment in the Senate for refusing to move forward with the President's request for emergency funding to deal with the humanitarian crisis we are facing on our southern border with Texas.

Ordinary working people do not close up shop with urgent work still undone, and neither should we. There is plenty of blame to go around; as I speak, there is a strong chance the House will leave town without taking action on this crisis either. The administration has asked for money, but has yet to speak clearly on what changes it needs in the law governing how we handle child migrants at the border.

As we all know, over the past several months, our Nation has experienced an unprecedented surge in migration from three countries: El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. People from these countries are fleeing desperate, violent conditions and a large number of them are families, and unaccompanied children—some as young as 4 years old.

The President and Department of Homeland Secretary, DHS, Johnson responded with an all-hands-on-deck effort. The Federal Emergency Management Administration, FEMA, is coordinating the response to the problem. The Department of Defense is providing emergency beds for unaccompanied minors. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has greatly expanded its ability to detain and remove families. We have surged Border Patrol agents, immigration judges, and other

personnel to the border to help process people.

These measures have been working. For example, the amount of time people are detained before they are removed has decreased from over a month to as little as 4 days in recent weeks. Migrant children who were languishing in crowded border patrol stations are being screened and relocated more quickly. But these emergency measures are expensive, and none of the Federal agencies involved have the money they need to sustain the aggressive steps they are taking to deal with this situation. In fact, many agencies have indicated that they will run out of money in a matter of weeks without action—some even in a few days.

So last week, Senator MIKULSKI introduced a bill that would provide \$2.7 billion in order to address the situation and ensure that the agencies charged with securing our borders do not run out of money this summer. More importantly, it would also address some of the underlying root causes of the problem we face.

But here we are, the day before Congress leaves town, and what have we done to address this crisis? The answer is nothing.

The consequences of our inaction will be severe. Let me give you some examples of what will happen if Congress continues to do nothing.

Families apprehended at the border will be released. Why? Because Immigration and Customs Enforcement does not have the money to add the 3,000 detention beds it needs to house families until they can be returned to their countries;

Undocumented migrants scheduled to be deported will stay here. Why? Because ICE won't have the money for transportation.

People currently being detained will have to be released. Why? Because ICE will have to reduce its detention population.

Undocumented immigrants waiting for their immigration court cases to be heard will have to wait longer. Why? Because we are not adding the 40 immigration court judges that the administration requested.

We also will not be able to hire the 82 immigration prosecutors and 100 repatriation personnel that DHS was planning to hire in August. Why? Because we will not be able to afford them.

Health and Human Services will have to cut back on the number of children it can house. This means that children will have to stay at Border Patrol stations longer and agents will be forced to care for children instead of patrolling the border. Why? Because Health and Human Services will not have the money it needs.

I am frankly stunned that we here in Congress do not have a sense of urgency to pass this bill and make sure that this does not happen. I guess my colleagues believe that we can just move money around in order to patch the holes in these agencies' budgets. We are robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Because of Congress' inaction, the administration will be forced to ask for an emergency reprogramming to get the agencies through August. But this reprogramming will also have severe consequences—consequences that I do not think many of our colleagues seem to understand.

Our border security will be reduced. Why? Because CBP will have to cut back on aerial support for Border Patrol agents on the border. When I was in Texas and Arizona last year, I heard frontline agents say again and again that aerial support was the single most important force multiplier that they had available to help them secure the border.

People and commerce trying to get into this country will be forced to longer delays and intrusive screenings at our ports of entry. Why? Because CBP will have to take money that was going to be used to fund sophisticated scanning equipment to pay for caring for unaccompanied children at the border.

The Coast Guard will have to stop doing maintenance on many of our Coast Guard vessels. Why? Because the Coast Guard's funds will be shifted.

FEMA will have less money for disaster response just as folks in coastal states, like Delaware, are gearing up for the height of hurricane season. Why? Because DHS will have to raid its Disaster Relief Fund in order to make ends meet.

This is no way to respond to a crisis—a crisis—that we have been talking and talking and talking about here in the Senate for months!

Finally—and in my mind, most incredibly—we will leave here without doing anything to address the underlying factors that explain why this surge is happening in the first place. The President and Senator MIKULSKI included \$300 million in the supplemental package to address what I believe to be the root causes of this surge: the lack of economic opportunities, jobs, and hope in Central America, combined with increasing violence and insecurity in the region. Make no mistake about it, these funds are an emergency.

I am not suggesting that any of this will be a quick or easy fix. It will require a sustained investment—and focus—on the region by the U.S. and also by a number of others. But if we turn our backs on these countries now, I am convinced that we will be back here again 10 years from now dealing with another expensive humanitarian crisis on our border.

But today, we are left empty-handed, and all by our own doing. Again, we have been seeing this humanitarian crisis play out for months now. We have heard the heartbreaking stories of the Central American children and families arriving at our borders.

I believe that we have a moral imperative here to address this crisis with a humane response and one that honors our obligations under U.S. and international law—and is consistent with the