Now for those people who say: Well, the States can fix this problem all on their own, I ask you: What could Nevada do to protect itself from what teachers or school districts are doing in Los Angeles? What could West Virginia have done about a Pennsylvania school district that sent a teacher across the State line with a letter of recommendation? There is nothing one State can do to bind another State. This requires a Federal solution.

Let me sum this up. The Toomey-Manchin bill offers a very simple proposition. If a school district wants to use Federal tax dollars to hire school employees, it has to make sure they are not hiring pedophiles in the process. I think that is pretty reasonable. Specifically, they need to perform background checks on any worker who comes in unsupervised contact with children, and they need to stop passing the trash.

I can't believe this is even controversial. There is nobody who can stand here and say protections against child sex predators are not urgently needed, not in light of the daily revelations we are discovering.

Again, this legislation has overwhelming bipartisan support. It passed the House unanimously. How many bills pass the House unanimously these days? This did. And every Member of the House and Senate except one voted for even more extensive background checks to protect our youngest kids in childcare. Can't we provide the same protection to slightly older kids? The legislation has been endorsed by innumerable child advocate and law enforcement groups, including the National Children's Alliance, which accredits and represents the Nation's 777 child advocacy centers. Yet I am afraid we are probably going to have some opposition voiced about this legislation when we offer the amendment.

Let me be clear. First, we are not opposing a mandate on the States. We don't have the legal authority to do that. What we are simply saying is if States want to take Federal funds, they need to protect children from violent and sexual predators. If States don't want to take those measures, then they can choose not to take Federal funds. If a State has no interest in having a rigorous system for protecting kids, well, that is their decision, but we don't have to send Federal tax dollars to pay the salaries of pedophiles.

Let me conclude. This is a commonsense bill. It is long overdue. It has very broad bipartisan support. It passed the House unanimously. As I said, in this body, all but one Member voted for an even more expansive background check.

Several Senators have voiced some specific concerns, and I am working with several of them. I am willing to work with Senators who want to find ways to constructively improve this bill, but I am not going to support a bill that waters down our ability to protect our kids from pedophiles in school.

I hope this body will overwhelmingly adopt the legislation that passed the House unanimously, and we can begin to have a more thorough and effective process of protecting our kids.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Is my understanding correct that it is the time for the minority?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct. There is 24 minutes remaining.

Mr. NELSON. I thank the Chair.

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, when 47 Republican Senators signed a letter sent to the Ayatollah Khomeini, it was a letter that although supposedly instructive of the constitutional provisions of the separation of government in the United States, in effect, it was a letter to erode the negotiating position of the President of the United States and his administration in trying to reach an agreement to not have a nuclear weapon capability of building a bomb in Iran.

I think history will show the strength of American foreign policy has always been bipartisanship when it comes to the interests of America as we look out and have to defend ourselves against our enemies. Indeed, Iran with a nuclear bomb would be one of the gravest threats to our national security as well as to our allies. It saddens me that we have come to the point where we are so divided that nearly half of the Senators, on a partisan basis, in this great institution of the U.S. Senate, would in effect try to cut the legs from underneath the President and his administration in trying to reach an agreement to avert a nuclear bomb.

So much has been said about this issue, but one common theme runs throughout, and it is that people seem to know what the agreement is as it is being negotiated in secret. This Senator will reserve judgment. This Senator is also an original cosponsor of the bill we filed to have Congress weigh in on any future lifting of economic sanctions that have been imposed by the Congress, and this Senator feels that is an appropriate role, under the separation of powers, of our job as Congress. But when we see a major part, on a partisan basis, of our government try to undercut and kill the negotiations while they are going on at this very moment in Geneva, then that goes a step too far.

I am saddened. I think about what this Senator would have done when the President was not Barack Obama but George Bush. I cannot imagine that I would have tried to undercut the President of the United States representing this country and trying, on matters of war and peace, to keep peace. We can disagree about the specifics, but we still have to honor the institution of the Presidency, and when it becomes matters of war and peace, then we have to unify. That is why I am so saddened that we have come to the point at which we appear to be so divided.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Florida for his comments and I echo those this morning.

To the Presiding Officer and to the Members of the Senate, it was 70 years ago this year, in this very Chamber, that the Republican Senator from Michigan, Arthur Vandenberg, gave a speech which has been called the speech heard around the world. Here is how Senator Vandenberg opened that speech:

> Mr. President, there are critical moments in the life of every nation which call for the straightest, the plainest, and the most courageous thinking of which we are capable. We confront such a moment now. It is not only desperately important to America, it is important to the world. It is important not only to the generation which lives in blood. It is important to future generations if they shall live in peace.

This was after World War I and World War II, facing the Cold War and many challenges.

Senator Vandenberg was no friend of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He was, in fact, the biggest thorn in the President's side. He opposed every New Deal program. He was bitterly opposed to U.S. engagement in Europe before World War II. He was the Nation's most famous isolationist and only moderated his stance after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

But 70 years ago Senator Vandenberg spoke on the floor of the Senate to warn his colleagues about what would happen if the United States of America allowed partisan politics to interfere in our Nation's leadership in the world. He later became the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where he coined the phrase ''politics stops at the water's edge.''

Politics stops at the water's edge.

His wisdom when it came to foreign policy—his understanding that for America to be strong, we must convey strength on the world's stage—earned him a rare recognition, in fact, in this body.

My colleagues will recognize this picture because it is a painting hanging in the room right outside this Chamber. I was honored to be there when it was unveiled—Senator Levin and myself—a few years ago. We are proud of this Republican Senator from Michigan. He has been given an honor that is shared by only a handful of Senators. In our Senate history, out of 1,963 Senators—men and women who have served—only a small group have been honored with a painting, a portrait just outside this Chamber, and he is one of them.

I can only imagine what Senator Vandenberg would say if he were alive

today. How would he react to a letter signed by 47 U.S. Senators, all of his own party, addressed to the leaders—those we have called enemies—of Iran? How would he react to Members of the U.S. Senate empowering Iranian hardliners—those whom we have called enemies time and time and time again—just to score political points against a President they do not like?

To be clear, Senator Vandenberg loathed President Roosevelt, and by all accounts the feelings were mutual. Senator Vandenberg was no model of bipartisanship himself. He was not at all what we would call a moderate in his time. He may be considered a moderate today, but at the time he was extremely partisan as a Republican, and he was very prominent. He disagreed with the President's policies relating to Japan, but he didn't send a letter to the Emperor of Japan undermining the foreign policy of the President of the United States. He disagreed with the President's policies relating to Germany, but he did not send a letter to the chancellor of the Third Reich expressing his disagreements with the President of the United States.

To be clear, one of the great things about America is that we can and should and must disagree with the President when we disagree with directions and policies. But when war hangs in the balance—and specifically when nuclear war hangs in the balance—should Members of the U.S. Senate be in a position of publicly undermining the President of the United States to our enemies? I do not believe Senator Vandenberg would have become pen pals with a group of extremists whose stated goal is ''death to America.''

It is shocking, dangerous, and deeply troubling to me that 47 Members of this body decided to throw away 70 years of wisdom to stand on the side of the Ayatollahs and the most extreme voices in Iran.

When President Bush decided to invade Iraq, I voted no. I voted against his policies. I spoke out publicly about my concerns about that war, but I never would have sent a letter to Saddam Hussein undermining the President before that war happened.

The chairs of the Senate Armed Services Committee, the chairs of the Senate Intelligence Committee, and the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at that time all opposed President Bush's invasion of Iraq, but none of them penned a letter to Saddam Hussein.

I do not have to wonder what Senator Vandenberg would have thought about all this because he told us. He told us 70 years ago in this very room when explaining how partisanship and division would undermine our efforts in Europe.

Senator Vandenberg said:

> It must mean one for all and all for one; and it will mean this—unless somewhere in this grand alliance the stupid and sinister folly of ulterior ambitions shall invite the enemy to postpone our victory through our own rivalries and our own confusion.

So I urge my colleagues to hear the words of the Republican Senator from Michigan, Arthur Vandenberg. I urge them to stop the politics at the water's edge.

We are talking about the possibility of a nuclear Iran. We all agree that must not happen. We all agree that must not happen. We all agree that must not happen. We must stand together with the smartest, most effective strategy to make sure that does not happen. That is even more reason why this is not the time nor the place to score political points against the President of the opposite party. This is deadly serious for the United States, for Israel, and for the world.

As the Senate saw fit to give Senator Vandenberg a place of high honor, reserved for only a few Senate leaders, just a few steps from here in the U.S. Capitol, I hope my colleagues will hear and take heed of his words now.

He said:

> We cannot drift to victory. We must have maximum united effort on all fronts. . . . And we must deserve, we must deserve the continued united effort of our own people. . . . politics must stop at the water's edge.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The assistant minority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, how much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Nine minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me commend my colleagues Senator NELSON from Florida and Senator STABENOW from Michigan for their statements. Senator NELSON spoke from his heart and spoke for many of us on both sides of the aisle who feel this letter sent by 47 Senators undermines the efforts of the President of the United States to avoid a nuclear Iran and to avoid a military response.

I particularly want to thank my colleague Senator STABENOW from Michigan for recalling that moment in history which any student of the Senate knows was something that made a difference in the foreign policy of the United States of America for 70 years. It is seldom that any of us comes to the floor and thinks that our speeches will be remembered for 70 minutes, but 70 years later Arthur Vandenberg, Republican of Michigan, set a standard for foreign policy which has guided our country since. At a time of deep political division after World War II, this self-described isolationist and extremely conservative enemy of the New Deal stood and called for unity when it comes to foreign policy. His admonition that politics should stop at the water's edge has largely guided us.

When we look at all the controversies that have ensued since then—think of the Vietnam war and what was going on in this body during that war, the deep divisions between Democrats and Republicans, those who were against the war and for the war. Yet there was never, ever anything like we have seen with this letter sent by 47 Republican Senators.

I am glad it didn't occur then, even though I had deep misgivings and trouble with the Vietnam war in its execution. I would have had to have been reckless to endorse an idea that our Nation, through its Senate, would reach out to the Vietnamese during the course of that war, when so many lives were at stake and so many lives were lost.

So here we are today—a letter sent by 47 Republican Senators. We have talked about the impact of that. Reflect for a moment on the impact of that letter on our allies who are sitting at the table in Geneva, our allies who joined us in imposing the strictest sanctions in history on Iran to force them into negotiation, our allies, sitting with Secretary Kerry and representatives of our government, who must look at this letter from 47 Republicans and say: Why are we wasting our time? What they are saying is no matter what we do—because no agreement has been announced—no matter what we do, the Republican Senate is going to reject it. That is what the letter says.

It goes on to say—and this is a little bit of chutzpah according to the New York Times. The Senators signing the letter go on to remind the Ayatollah, who is not term-limited, that they have 6-year terms and may be around for decades—decades—and basically say to the Iranians: Don't even waste your time thinking about negotiating.

It is not a waste of time because the alternatives are absolutely horrifying. The alternative of a nuclear Iran would be a threat not only to the Nation of Israel and many other Middle Eastern States and countries beyond, in Europe and other places, but it would invite a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. The ending is totally unacceptable and unpredictable.

So is it worth negotiating? Is it worth trying to find a way to avoid a nuclear Iran? Of course it is. Should the negotiations fail—and they might. I hope not because of this letter, but they might—then what do we face; bringing Iran to its knees with more sanctions? Whom will we call on for these sanctions? Whom will we turn to and say: Will you join us in a more strict sanctions regime? The very same allies who sat at this table and saw this letter from 47 Republican Senators saying to them: Don't waste your time; we have the last word when it comes to Iran.

I don't believe the Republican leadership was thinking clearly when they signed on to this letter. I don't think they understood the gravity of their action. They certainly were premature, at the minimum. We don't have an agreement. We are days away from understanding whether there is a possibility of an agreement. Yet these 47 Senators have basically said: Don't waste your time; we are not going to accept it no matter what it is.

This is a sad outcome. Similar to the Senator from Michigan, I was 1 of 23

who voted against the invasion of Iraq. I never dreamed for one minute of sending a letter to Saddam Hussein before that vote instructing him about the politics of America. It turns out that in the history of the Senate that has rarely, if ever, occurred.

I hope now that those 47 Republican Senators will reflect on their actions and reflect on the impact it will have. I hope the American people understand the President is embarking on a very difficult and delicate mission to try to negotiate a verifiable end to the nuclear arms race in the Middle East and specifically to end nuclear capability in Iran. He may not achieve it, but I respect him for trying. He is the Commander in Chief of the United States of America. He is the elected leader of our Nation. Though many in this Chamber cannot accept it, he is the President of the United States, and he deserves our respect.

I respected President George W. Bush, even when I disagreed with him on his policies on Iraq, and we should expect nothing less of the loyal minority when it comes to this President as well.

I conclude by saying the Senate has an important role to play. But the President's role, speaking for the United States—trying to avoid a nuclear Iran, trying to avoid a military conflict, another war in the Middle East—is something that should not be undermined for political ambition.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to completely align myself with views of the distinguished Senator from Illinois. This isn't a case of who can score political points for the evening news broadcast. We are talking about potentially the lives of millions of people. We are talking about the possibility of a cataclysmic mistake that could create havoc long after any of us has left this body. I have had the honor of representing Vermont in the Senate beginning at the time when Gerald Ford was President.

We have had Presidents I have agreed with—in fact, with every President there have been things I agreed with and with every President, Democratic or Republican, there have been things I have disagreed with. But one thing I have always done when there are such negotiations going on, I am willing to talk to the President privately, but I am not going to state my position, for or against, publicly. We can only have one person negotiating for the United States. Can you imagine if everybody who wanted to rush to the cable news shows to get on TV were to say, well, here is our negotiating position—and we are going to force the President to leave the negotiating table? What do you think those countries that joined us in imposing multilateral sanctions would do?

Many of those countries that joined us are doing so at great economic cost to themselves, but they responded—when President Obama went to each of them and asked: Will you join us in imposing sanctions, they agreed. That made the sanctions far more effective. If they think we are not serious, they are going to be very tempted to ask: Why should we join you in supporting sanctions in the future? If the United States were alone in supporting sanctions, no matter what those sanctions are, it would not create any real pressure on Iran.

Have we not made enough mistakes in the Middle East? I remember some who said we must go to war in Iraq because it would protect Israel or because they had nuclear weapons or because they had weapons of mass destruction. None of that was true. None of it. I remember people stopping me on the street, angry that I voted against the war in Iraq. They said: We heard Vice President Cheney say they have nuclear weapons. I said: There are none.

The senior Senator from Michigan, in quoting Arthur Vandenberg—he was no fan of Franklin Roosevelt, quite the opposite, but he did say, as we were going into World War II, ''politics must stop at the water's edge.'' That has been the view in my own State of both Republicans and Democrats.

Let's stop rushing for the cameras and potentially hurting the Senate, potentially hurting the country. Let's think about what is best for the country.

I see the distinguished chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee on the floor, so I will yield the floor so he can speak.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of S. 178, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 178) to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

S. 178

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

TITLE I—JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

SEC. 101. DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING VICTIMS' FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 201 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''$3014. Additional special assessment

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on the date of enactment of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 and ending on September, 30 2019, in addition to the assessment imposed under section 3013, the court shall assess an amount of $5,000 on any non-indigent person or entity convicted of an offense under—

''(1) chapter 77 (relating to peonage, slavery, and trafficking in persons);

''(2) chapter 109A (relating to sexual abuse);

''(3) chapter 110 (relating to sexual exploitation and other abuse of children);

''(4) chapter 117 (relating to transportation for illegal sexual activity and related crimes); or

''(5) section 274 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1324) (relating to human smuggling), unless the person induced, assisted, abetted, or aided only an individual who at the time of such action was the alien's spouse, parent, son, or daughter (and no other individual) to enter the United States in violation of law.

''(b) SATISFACTION OF OTHER COURT-ORDERED OBLIGATIONS.—An assessment under subsection (a) shall not be payable until the person subject to the assessment has satisfied all outstanding court-ordered fines and orders of restitution arising from the criminal convictions on which the special assessment is based.

''(c) ESTABLISHMENT OF DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING VICTIMS' FUND.—There is established in