

main Justice and the Attorney General—in order to try to tackle and turn our city's public safety situation around.

Today there are critical issues facing this country—urgent issues facing this country—that deal with the relationship between our communities and law enforcement agencies. If there were ever a time when we would want to have a confirmed Attorney General in office without question marks surrounding when that confirmation will take place, it would be now.

Over the last few months, we have seen a series of controversies that have torn at all of us as we have watched challenges and distrust between communities and law enforcement agencies. In early August, Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old, was shot during a confrontation with an officer in Ferguson, MO. That shooting spurred nationwide protests and concerns against what many in Ferguson and elsewhere viewed as overly aggressive tactics by the police.

A month prior to the death of Michael Brown, Eric Garner died as a result of a police chokehold in July in New York when he was confronted over the selling of untaxed cigarettes. There have been similar instances in Cleveland and Madison. It is not limited to one part of the country. It is not limited to North, South, East, or West. There have been similar instances that have raised serious concerns about the connection between law enforcement and communities.

There have also been horrible atrocities committed against members of the law enforcement community, the deaths of two NYPD officers, Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos, who were shot pointblank weeks ago in New York City while they sat in their patrol car. Yesterday, as we heard reported, there were shootings of police officers in Ferguson, MO.

These instances in cities around the country demonstrate a significant level of tension and even distrust between the police and communities they serve, which are often minority communities or communities of color.

I am here to say these tensions do not have to exist. They can be bridged. They can be solved. But it takes a fully functioning Department of Justice with a leader at the helm who has been confirmed to solve these issues.

The Department of Justice has, throughout history and today, played a critical role in investigating cases such as this and some of the situations I mentioned. The DOJ has been able to come in and be involved and provide some calm to situations, provide some level of confidence that there would not be a sugarcoating or an effort to sweep legitimate questions into the closet in the community.

In the State of Virginia, there is currently a DOJ investigation concerning the police shooting death of John Geer, an unarmed Caucasian who was shot on the steps of his residence in August of

2013. Local officials in that county have welcomed the involvement of the Department of Justice because they knew that citizens would have a greater confidence in the outcome if it was being done by someone other than the officials who had been elected locally.

There is a critical need at this point to provide some confidence to communities that have questions about the relationship between their own concerns and the service of law enforcement departments, just as law enforcement departments want to have a way to build bridges with the communities they represent.

Loretta Lynch understands the significance of the Attorney General's role in these situations. She testified that one of her key priorities would be to work to strengthen the bonds between law enforcement personnel, whom she has worked with during her entire career, and the communities they serve which she well understands.

Last week, the DOJ released a report from their investigation into the Ferguson policing practices that laid out a number of significant concerns that, if left unaddressed, will continue to lead to distrust in Ferguson and elsewhere. A strong Justice Department that can help mediate and bring the sides together is a part of the solution.

I raised these issues only to highlight that right now we are at a critical time in the Nation's criminal justice system. A delay of confirming an Attorney General for 4-plus months is never warranted, given the importance of the position. A delay is not warranted in this case, given these strong credentials of Loretta Lynch, but the delay is especially unwelcome, given the urgent need to have leadership at the Department of Justice. They can try to calm any potential situations and build confidence in communities and among law enforcement agencies.

We need our incoming AG to be on the job, taking on these challenges in a manner that will bring different aspects of the community together, to make changes as necessary and to strengthen the equality of our criminal justice system for all.

Of course, beyond the issue of community policing, we face so many other challenges, such as national security and terrorism, and in that respect the Eastern District of New York, which is where Ms. Lynch has served, has had one of the most significant dockets of antiterrorism cases of any jurisdiction in the country. She is an expert in those areas. Cyber security, the very human trafficking issues we have been discussing on the floor today, are issues Ms. Lynch has worked on significantly in her role, protecting voting rights, and so many more.

Ms. Lynch is a no-nonsense, hard-working prosecutor known for her aplomb, her demeanor, her intelligence, and her ability to work with a wide variety of stakeholders. I am absolutely confident Ms. Lynch will approach these issues with the same

focus, fairness, and expertise with which she has approached her work in the past.

I stand today to urge my colleagues to not wait, and to support Loretta Lynch as our next Attorney General. It has been said to the point where it is a cliché, but nevertheless a true one, that justice delayed is justice denied. The refusal to confirm a leader to head the most important law enforcement agency in the United States is a delay of justice that for many seems to be a denial of justice. We can rectify that concern in communities across this country if we act with dispatch to confirm a person who is eminently qualified to hold the Nation's highest law enforcement position.

With that, I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Senator from Mississippi has graciously allowed me to speak before him, and I ask unanimous consent that Senator WICKER be recognized immediately upon the conclusion of my comments.

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

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we have been working on the issue of human trafficking on a bipartisan basis for almost a year, and it is usually bipartisan.

I know when we included my amendment on the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, most Senators voted for it. Only 20 current Republican senators voted against that victims act, and the rest voted for it. All the Democrats voted for it.

But on this issue today, the Judiciary Committee reported out a comprehensive bill with strong bipartisan support. We did that last fall. This year we reported out a less comprehensive bill with fewer protections for those at risk of human trafficking, and despite that setback, I agreed to keep working across the aisle to make it stronger, including the crucial prevention piece that was in last year's committee-reported bill.

We have been on this bill for 3 days. I think we can all admit the progress has been thwarted by the inclusion of a divisive provision that would limit the services available to victims of human trafficking.

I wish to propose a way forward. I know all Senators want to work together to end human trafficking. And just as we saw on my bill, the Violence Against Women Act, 78 Senators voted for that act with its provision on trafficking. We want to support a bill that will pass the Senate.

I filed a substitute amendment, Senate Amendment 300, to get us around

our current impasse. It includes three things. First, the Klobuchar-Cornyn bill as reported earlier this month by the Judiciary Committee; second, the Cornyn-Klobuchar bill, also reported earlier this month by the Judiciary Committee, but without the divisive language that limits victims services; third, the Leahy-Collins-Murkowski-Ayotte amendment that was filed yesterday to protect runaway and homeless youth from trafficking.

This trafficking prevention bill was reported by the Judiciary Committee last year with the support of Senator GRASSLEY, Senator CORNYN, and nearly all of the other Judiciary Committee members, but has been narrowed here at the request of Republicans this year.

I hope the combination of these three bills—and I do it in good faith—can bring us together. More importantly, it is responsive to the requests of survivors and the many dedicated people who work with them to remove the unnecessary partisan provision that has resulted in this impasse. They need us to find a way forward. They need the Senate to stop playing politics and pass a meaningful bill.

With that, I ask unanimous consent that letters written by a number of groups and others who support the removal of this divisive provision so that we can move forward on this trafficking legislation be printed in the RECORD.

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

THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR YOUTH,
March 11, 2015.

Hon. PATRICK LEAHY,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LEAHY: The National Network for Youth is grateful for your leadership on human trafficking which is a dark mark on our modern society. Slavery has no place in America and we stand proudly with you to prevent and end human trafficking in America.

The National Network for Youth, founded in 1974, champions the needs of runaway, homeless, and other disconnected youth through strengthening the capacity of community-based services, facilitating resource sharing, and educating the public and policy makers. NN4Y members work collaboratively to prevent youth homelessness and the inherent risks of homelessness, including exploitation, human trafficking, criminal justice involvement, and death.

Human trafficking is a bipartisan and non-partisan issue. Together, we stand united against modern day slavery, including both sex and labor trafficking. Presently, we are at an important moment in the Senate with both parties unified to take a strong stand against human trafficking, from prevention to law enforcement, and service provision to survivors. We are so pleased that the Runaway and Homeless and Youth Trafficking Prevention has become a part of this important conversation and we thank you for your support of that legislation last Congress.

The National Network for Youth is writing this letter with the hope that the U.S. Senate will remove the partisan piece of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. This legislation is desperately needed and we cannot let this moment pass us by because of the addition of partisan and divisive provisions.

Respectfully, thank you for your work. Please work across the aisle to ensure that this critical trafficking legislation becomes the law of the land.

Best regards,
DARLA BARDINE, J.D.,
Executive Director, National Network
for Youth.

VERMONT COALITION OF RUNAWAY &
HOMELESS YOUTH PROGRAMS,
Montpelier, VT, March 11, 2015.

Senator PATRICK LEAHY,
Russell Senate Building, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LEAHY, The Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs wishes to express our ongoing appreciation for your efforts to move the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act. As a longstanding champion of Federal support for efforts to assist vulnerable runaway, homeless and trafficked young people, I know that you must be as frustrated as we are in recent efforts to insert an element of partisanship into what should be a broadly bi-partisan effort to protect victims of human trafficking. The Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act and the broader legislation it's amended to should be important opportunities for citizens of the United States and lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to unite in moral outrage over the realities of victims of human trafficking.

Difference of opinion and the deliberative role of the Senate is part of what makes our democracy strong, but sometimes unity of purpose should prevail, particularly in efforts involving protections for the most vulnerable among us. There should be no doubt that legislation involving the well-being of individuals who have been victimized by the most base of human behavior should be free of partisan wrangling. It's disappointing and deeply distressing that this isn't always the case.

I write this letter to encourage your efforts to remove partisan language from the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act in an effort to ensure that the Act and the RHY amendment that Senator Collins and you introduced move forward unimpeded.

Again, thank you for your efforts on this issue.

Sincerely,
KREIG PINKHAM,

Executive Director,
Washington County
Youth Service Bureau/Boys & Girls
Club, VT Coalition
of Runaway &
Homeless Youth Programs Board Member.

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN,
Washington, DC, March 12, 2015.

DEAR SENATORS: On behalf of the Human Rights Campaign's (HRC) more than 1.5 million members and supporters nationwide, I write to support the Leahy substitute amendment to the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act which would ensure critical protections for victims of trafficking and add necessary protections for runaway and homeless youth that does not include an expansion of the Hyde Amendment language. Each of the components of this substitute amendment has strong bipartisan support.

This amendment will help many vulnerable populations including the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. LGBT individuals are particularly impacted by human trafficking and are at an increased risk for victimization globally. In fact, 10 percent of all trafficking victims

identify as LGBT. They also make up a disproportionate amount of the total homeless youth population. Recent studies have found that while LGBT youth comprise only 10 percent of the total youth population, up to 40 percent of youth living on the streets today identify as LGBT.

Increased incidence of homelessness and family rejection make LGBT individuals—especially youth—particularly vulnerable to trafficking. According to the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, one in four LGBT youth is rejected by their families because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Due to this rejection, many LGBT youth find themselves homeless and living on the streets. Once on the street, these youth are targeted for exploitation and trafficking.

Because homelessness can often lead to trafficking, inclusion of protections for runaway and homeless youth will result in a more effective Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs provide critical funding for support systems that serve youth who become homeless. The programs funded by the act—including emergency shelters, street outreach, transitional living and assistance for homeless youth in rural areas—can serve as critical, final safety nets for youth who would otherwise become victims of trafficking.

According to the American Bar Association, for LGBT people who are trafficked the societal stigma around their sexual orientation or gender identity is an additional factor that prevents them from accessing help or reporting abuse. This amendment provides important protections against discrimination for LGBT youth by prohibiting any program funded by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act from discriminating on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.

We greatly appreciate your commitment to improving the lives of young people across America, including those who are LGBT. Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,
DAVID STACY,
Government Affairs Director,
Human Rights Campaign.

Planned Parenthood Action Fund
For Immediate Release: Tuesday, March 10, 2015

Contact: Planned Parenthood Action Fund
media office: 212-261-4433

PLANNED PARENTHOOD CONDEMNS EFFORT TO
INSERT EXTREME ANTI-ABORTION AGENDA
INTO BILL ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

WASHINGTON DC.— Planned Parenthood Action Fund condemned efforts by Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) to advance an extreme abortion restriction as part of important bipartisan efforts to establish greater protections for victims of human trafficking. Following is a statement by Cecile Richards, President, Planned Parenthood Action Fund:

“It's outrageous that some politicians are using a bill to protect victims of sex trafficking to push an extreme anti-abortion, anti-immigrant agenda. This is politics at its worst. A bill that was supposed to help women is instead being used to hurt women.

“The Senate should protect victims of human trafficking but should not do so at the expense of women's access to safe and legal abortion. The majority of human trafficking victims are women and girls, and they need access to the full range of reproductive health care services without barriers.”

LEGAL MOMENTUM,
Washington, DC, March 12, 2015.

NEW YORK, NY.—Today, Legal Momentum, the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund, urged that a provision harmful to women's health be removed from a human trafficking bill being considered by the Senate, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (S. 178).

"The intent of this bill—to support survivors of trafficking—will be subverted if the provision is left intact. Human trafficking survivors—survivors of the worst kind of exploitation, which our government has called 'modern slavery'—who were raped and became pregnant should have access to the full spectrum of health services, including abortion," said Legal Momentum's President and CEO, Carol Robles-Román.

Legal Momentum fully supports the aims of the bill minus the troubling provisions. The bill would enhance services for runaway and homeless victims of youth trafficking, improve the response to victims of child sex trafficking, and establish an interagency task force to monitor and combat trafficking. Harmful provisions that deny health care to victims, restrict women's health options, are harmful to immigrants, or fail to adequately protect the LGBT community, should be removed so that the bill can help victims of one of the most heinous crimes, human trafficking, which has been condemned by the whole world. We urge all senators to vote for the Leahy Comprehensive Substitute Amendment, which adheres to the bi-partisan compromises made when the JVTFA was reported out of the Judiciary Committee.

GIVE WAY TO FREEDOM,
Essex Junction, VT, March 11, 2015.

Hon. PATRICK LEAHY,
Russell Senate Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LEAHY, Thank you for your ongoing leadership in the fight to protect victims of human trafficking and ensure that they receive full support and services to which they are entitled under federal law. Give Way to Freedom is a private operating Foundation based in Vermont that works with victims of trafficking throughout New England and southeast New York. Through this work we see first-hand the complex needs of victims of trafficking.

As Vermont and New England continue to build our response to this heinous crime it is vital that victims remain the core focus of all efforts. We applaud your dedication to this principal, and support your efforts to ensure that victims of trafficking receive the full range of support and services they need to recover and rebuild their lives.

Sincerely,

EDITH KLIMOSKI,
Director.

CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS,
Washington, DC, March 12, 2015.
Ranking Member PATRICK LEAHY,
Senate Judiciary Committee, Russell Senate
Building, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR RANKING MEMBER LEAHY, I write today to thank you for your leadership in helping victims of trafficking and resolving the unacceptable situation with the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (S. 178). The Center for American Progress extends our deep support for your Comprehensive Substitute Amendment that removes abortion restrictions for the funds to help victims of trafficking and retains nondiscrimination provisions in the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

Thank you again for your leadership in moving these important pieces of legislation forward without harmful restrictions.

Sincerely,

DONNA BARRY,
Director of Women's Health and
Rights Program.

Mr. LEAHY. I yield the floor, and I thank the Senator from Mississippi for his courtesy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, the distinguished Senator from Vermont is quite welcome, and I am glad we were able to accommodate each other.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH IRAN

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to discuss the gravity of the current situation with regard to the administration's negotiations with Iran for a nuclear agreement.

I believe it is important to note that we received some important information today in the Senate Armed Services Committee that is helpful to us in this regard.

This morning the Armed Services Committee heard from ADM Bill Gortney. He gave us his assessment of Iran's capabilities and ongoing efforts to thwart international agencies. Admiral Gortney is the commander of the U.S. Northern Command. He is personally responsible for defending Americans in the United States mainland. He is an appointee of President Obama, and here are the words given to us today by Admiral Gortney: Iran has "committed considerable resources to enhancing its ballistic missile capabilities and has already placed another satellite into orbit this year using a new booster that could serve as a demonstrator for ICBM, intercontinental ballistic technologies. Despite international condemnation and sanctions, Iran has failed to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency to resolve all outstanding concerns regarding its nuclear program, particularly those concerning its possible military dimensions."

These are the words from the head of the Northern Command in this administration, and this regime, which Admiral Gortney described, is the very regime our President and Secretary of State have confidence will live up to any nuclear agreement.

As the Admiral went on to say, the hope for a diplomatic solution should not come without vigilance, and that is what Members on this side of the aisle are trying to insist upon. We cannot ignore these warning signs of noncompliance and uncooperative behavior while expecting Iran to make good on its promises.

A few days ago Prime Minister Netanyahu stressed Iran's record of misconduct and sinister objectives in his powerful address to Congress. He emphasized that a nuclear Iran would have serious implications for the world, the region, and of course for

Israel, one of our most steadfast allies. These concerns are important for lawmakers, and I am glad we had a chance to hear them in person.

With a record of foreign policy failures, I regret to say President Obama is under intense scrutiny to hold Iran accountable at this critical moment. He is under intense scrutiny because of these foreign policy failures. Like many of my colleagues, I am concerned and I think Americans are concerned that the administration might be too generous with concessions to Iran, as it has been with deals in past.

The time is running out for the President to establish his legacy—a dangerous motivation for negotiations with the unreliable and volatile nation Admiral Gortney described today.

At the very least, the Senate should insist on the passage of a partisan bill to ensure that the American people have a say in any agreement between the White House and Iran. Congressional approval would add legitimacy to any agreement, and I think that is important. Any foreign nation negotiating with the United States should be mindful of our constitutional system of checks and balances. Congress should also be discussing the appropriate steps to take if an agreement is not reached by the deadline this month.

The President is now threatening to veto legislation that puts tougher sanctions on Iran. But shouldn't there be consequences for Iran if they refuse to cooperate with international investigators? Mistakes are too high to make excuses for stalled negotiations or to rely on wishful thinking about Iran's intentions.

As Mr. Netanyahu said in his speech, "If Iran wants to be treated like a normal country, let it act like a normal country."

Instead Iran continues to support terrorist groups and oppressive authoritarian regimes. We cannot afford to ignore its influence in unstable areas and how this influence could dramatically change should they be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon.

Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech is a reminder that Iran has made no excuses for its belligerent aims and ties to terrorist groups. A bad deal would spell disaster for Israel, whose very existence has been threatened by Iranian leaders.

Israel and the United States share an unwavering commitment to keeping Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. It is unfortunate that criticism from the Obama administration surrounded the Prime Minister's earlier visit.

Meanwhile, the world is not safer. Global threats continue to multiply, posing complex challenges to America's national security issues. One looks at the unrest around the world, and it is easy to see how America is failing to lead.

Another member of this administration, Director of National Intelligence