

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

James Clapper, underscored the widespread instability when he testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee last month. It is important to compare Director Clapper's testimony with that of the Secretary of State earlier. Director Clapper, our Director of National Intelligence, said there were more deaths from state-sponsored mass killings, more people displaced from their homes, and a higher rate of political instability last year than we have seen in decades. In fact, 2014 was the most lethal year on record for terrorism. We are now facing unpredictable instability as the "new normal," according to this administration's Director of National Intelligence.

The White House's foreign policy team, however, seems unwilling to accept these harsh truths. Listen to the words of Secretary of State John Kerry, our chief negotiator with Iran, in contrast to the words of our Director of National Intelligence. Senator Kerry said:

We are actually living in a period of less daily threat to Americans and to people in the world than normally; less deaths, less violent deaths today, than through the last century.

It is hard to square the testimony of our chief negotiator with Iran with the words of our Director of National Intelligence.

Particularly troubling is the administration's past reliance on empty promises from adversaries. Under President Obama's watch, Vladimir Putin has invaded and annexed part of Ukraine, continued to support the brutal regime of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, and violated the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

On February 27, we saw yet another troubling development in Moscow. Opposition leader Boris Nemtsov was gunned down in cold blood on the street after dinner in a secure, well-protected part of Moscow, just steps away from the Kremlin. The Russian Government has denounced Mr. Nemtsov's assassination, but this is not the first time one of President Putin's opponents or critics has been murdered. I will only note that Mr. Nemtsov is only the latest in a line of Putin critics who have mysteriously met their demise over time, and Russia's record of corruption and shameful disregard for human rights continues.

In conclusion, U.S. leadership is of the utmost importance to global security and stability at this pivotal time. Director Clapper was frank in his testimony that "pervasive uncertainty makes it all the harder to predict the future." That is why we must remain vigilant. America can succeed if we demonstrate the fortitude and resolve necessary to defend freedom and stop those who threaten it. This includes taking an honest look at Iran's past and present behavior before we cut a deal we will later regret.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate in morning business and to enter into a colloquy with the Senator from South Carolina.

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

NEGOTIATIONS WITH IRAN

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, first of all, I wish to make reference to the famous letter by Senator COTTON to the Iranians conveying to them the realities of the U.S. Constitution and the situation as it will prevail, hopefully, and that is that the Congress of the United States must ratify any agreement between the United States and Iran. Anybody who says we shouldn't ignore history and ignores the impact of this treaty.

I signed that letter, and I believe it is a direct result of the President's statement that he would veto any role the U.S. Congress should play in the ratification or nonratification of a pending agreement. That is what triggered the letter from Senator COTTON, and that is why I stand by it.

Seventy-one percent of Americans believe negotiation with Tehran will not make a difference in preventing Iran from producing nuclear weapons, and 71 percent of the American people are right.

Now I wish to speak with my friend from South Carolina about the situation in Iraq today—specifically, the role Iran is playing and, even more specifically, the combat that is taking place around the city of Tikrit.

Tikrit is the hometown of Saddam Hussein. Tikrit is a Sunni stronghold. Tikrit is now under attack—the ISIS people who are occupying it—by Shia militia, including, specifically, the Badr brigades, and they are led and trained by Iranians. An individual named Soleimani, who is the head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, is now the most visible leader. Soleimani is the same guy who sent copper-tipped IEDs into Iraq which killed hundreds of American soldiers and marines. We now are somehow accommodating the individual who is responsible for the deaths of brave young Americans. That is not only unbelievable, it is totally unacceptable.

The question is, When these Shia militias get into Tikrit, how are they going to behave? There are well-documented human rights abuses by these Shia militias. Again, these are the same Badr brigades that we fought against in the Battle of Sadr City during the surge. And now the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff said in January: "As long as the Iraqi government remains committed to inclusivity of all the various groups inside the country, then I think Iranian influence will be positive." I am not making that up.

There is an AP story today that I wish to quote from entitled "Little progress in key plank of Obama anti-IS struggle."

Instead of reaching out for Sunnis, the Iraqi government has bolstered its already close ties to Iran and to Iranian-backed Shiite militias that have been credibly accused of massacring Sunnis, U.S. officials acknowledge. The Iraqi military's reliance on Shiite militias this week to retake Tikrit, a Sunni stronghold, has complicated the prospects of political reconciliation, experts say.

Human Rights Watch said in a March 4 report that it has documented "numerous" atrocities against Sunni civilians by the Shiite militias . . .

"They see it as a Persian invasion of the Sunni heartland," said John Maguire, a former CIA case officer with long Middle East experience who travels frequently to Iraq.

I am interested in the reaction of my friend from South Carolina to this:

After meeting with Abadi, Dempsey—

That is our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—

told reporters he was given firm assurances that the Shiite-led government is committed to reconciling with the Sunnis. Asked in an interview whether he considered those assurances credible Dempsey said, "They seemed credible today."

Dempsey noted that during his helicopter flight over Baghdad, he saw worrisome signs of Iranian influence. He spotted a "plethora of flags" at checkpoints and elsewhere in the capital, "only one of which happens to be the Iraqi flag," he said, alluding to the banners of Iranian-backed Shiite militias.

Can we get real, I ask my friend from South Carolina, as to what is taking place?

The Iranians are now in Sana'a, they are in Baghdad, they are in Beirut, they are in Damascus, and they are on the move. Meanwhile, this administration, this President, and this Secretary of State pursue the mirage of a nuclear agreement that will somehow change the entire equation.

I would also be interested in the views of the Senator from South Carolina of what the Saudis are doing, which is accommodating in their own way and possibly making plans to acquire their own nuclear weapons along with other nations in the Middle East.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, just to sum it up, our foreign policy is in a free-for-all. It is incompetent at its core.

No one can feel good about Shia-led groups going into Tikrit with Iranian command and control. If we know anything about Iraq, the hope for Iraq is for the Sunnis, the Shias, and the Kurds to accommodate each other's interests and to work together. So when we see a Shia-led effort against, as the Senator from Arizona said, the Sunni stronghold, with an Iranian commander on the ground who was responsible for killing Americans, and we think that is a good day for us, that is nuts. That is a bad day for America.

Let's talk a little bit about the Iranian nuclear negotiations. I did not sign Senator COTTON's letter until the President threatened to veto congressional legislation to make sure that we would have a say about relieving the sanctions we created. When President Obama told the Congress—a bipartisan