

Council resolutions; frequent and constant demands coming from this Chamber; four Presidents—two Republicans and two Democrats—saying a nuclear-capable Iran is unacceptable; the firm position of AIPAC and other friends of Israel—all stated the necessity that Iran give up and shut down all its uranium-enriching centrifuges. Yet this goal was jettisoned before the talks even started. The Obama administration spokesmen, including Secretary Kerry himself, have explained repeatedly that it was just too hard to achieve. We must be more realistic, we are told. The Iranians, we are told, can never be expected to agree to the demands laid down years ago by the Security Council. That was then, they said. This is now. Everything has changed. We have to set that goal aside, and we have to reach some reasonable agreement with a reasonable process with a reasonable country. The word we need to question there is “reasonable.”

Madam President, it appears my time is running out, but I notice that no other Member is here to speak, so I ask unanimous consent to speak for just 3 more minutes.

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

Mr. COATS. Madam President, I thank the Chair.

But even leaving that shocking capitulation aside, we can never expect that the Iranians would negotiate under those conditions. We can now focus on the key fatal flaw of this agreement. It has been simmering for months, but it is now boiling over onto the front pages of our national attention thanks to the presentation by the Prime Minister of Israel, and that is the sunset clause.

We now see that even if Iran is constrained by this agreement and even if in the most unlikely of worlds Iran fully complies with the agreement, at the end of a decade or so, Iran will be fully liberated to pursue nuclear capabilities with no limitations or constraints whatsoever—a free hand, a blank check to go forward, an Iran that will have wealth, the technical expertise, industrial infrastructure, the will, and, if given a sunset provision, the international acquiescence to do whatever they like to pursue their goal without any ability of us to stop it. They can do whatever they like.

Ten years—oh, that is a long time out. Ten years is tomorrow afternoon. It is a blink of the eye.

Such a sunset clause makes this entire enterprise unacceptable. Any agreement that contains a sunset clause must be rejected, and any agreement with Iran that does not impose permanent restraints on their nuclear ambitions is no agreement at all. We in the Senate have it within our ability and mandate to guarantee that happens, but to do so, we need to reach consensus across the aisle. We need to work together as Republicans and Democrats for the future security of

our Nation, and for that matter, all nations.

There are a number of issues on which we don't agree. There are a number of things on which we have different thoughts about how to proceed. But this is an issue of such historic consequence and such potential harm that we must find a way to work together to ensure our ability to undo what looks like is coming our way. So I plead with and I urge my colleagues—all my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats—to rise above any political considerations and work together to ensure that this Senate can prevent Iran from getting the bomb. History and future generations and our children and our grandchildren will judge what we do here now, and may that judgment be the right judgment for not just the future of our Nation but for the future of the world.

Madam President, with that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, last week the majority leader announced that he would finally schedule a vote for this week on the nomination of Loretta Lynch to be our next Attorney General. But as of today no date has been set. The Senate majority leader is now threatening to further delay a vote on this highly qualified nominee until after the Senate has concluded its debate on the human trafficking bill.

Now, there is really no good reason for Senate Republicans to continue dragging their feet on scheduling a vote on Ms. Lynch's nomination. I have been here long enough to know we can debate legislation and vote on nominations at the same time, and to say otherwise is a hollow excuse. In fact, last Thursday we voted on four other executive nominations while we were on the human trafficking bill. We are actually going to vote on two more executive nominations this evening while we are on the human trafficking bill.

All Senators who agree on the importance of ending human trafficking also know it is important to confirm Loretta Lynch as our Nation's top law enforcement officer. She has a proven track record of prosecuting human trafficking and child rape crimes. This is not just somebody who just talks about it and says how much they are opposed to human trafficking, as though anybody were in favor of human trafficking.

This not just someone who says she is opposed to child rape cases, as though anybody here were going to say

they are in favor of it. She has actually prosecuted them. Over the course of the last decade, the U.S. attorney's office that Ms. Lynch leads has indicted over 55 defendants in sex trafficking cases and rescued over 110 victims of sex trafficking. We stand here on the floor talking about these issues. She actually does it.

So I think she and the American people have waited long enough. President Obama announced the nomination of Ms. Lynch 4 months ago. The Judiciary Committee reported her nomination with bipartisan support 18 days ago. By tomorrow—we talk about whether we move fast or not. By tomorrow, her nomination will have been pending on the Senate floor longer than all of the past five attorneys general combined.

Take a look at this. Here is Loretta Lynch. She has been pending on the floor now for 18 days. This is, of course, with the months she had to wait before that. Now, Attorneys General Holder, Mukasey, Gonzales, Ashcroft, and Reno had to wait a total of 18 days pending after their nominations came out—so five of them, one of her. She has had to wait as long as five of them had to wait.

We also pointed out the amount of time—I look at the amount of time it took—for the four men who preceded her. All four of those men went through so much faster than she has. We happened to have a vote out of committee. Janet Reno took 1 day. John Ashcroft, who I helped get through the committee, although I did not support him, took 2 days. Alberto Gonzales took 8 days; Michael Mukasey, 2 days, and Eric Holder, 5 days.

This delay is an embarrassment to the Senate. Her qualifications are beyond reproach. But the Senate Republican leadership continues to delay a vote on her confirmation despite her impeccable credentials. Now, when she is confirmed, we know that Loretta Lynch will be the first African-American woman to serve our country as Attorney General. But instead of moving forward with this historic nomination, Senate Republicans appear intent on making history for all of the wrong reasons.

As David Hawkings wrote in a Roll Call article dated March 12:

Lynch is on a course to be confirmed this month after the longest wait ever for a nominee to be attorney general—and very likely by the closest vote ever to put a new person in charge of the Justice Department.

We want to send the signal that we are tough on crime. We want to send the signal that we want to get these traffickers. We want to send a signal that people who commit crimes, whether they are Republicans or Democrats, should go to jail. Yet we refuse to confirm the person who has actually done all of those things. It appears that some want to simply refuse to allow a vote on her nomination, effectively shirking the constitutional duty of the Senate to provide advice and consent.

One Republican Senator even tweeted on the weekend about the need to

block her historic nomination. Then, in case you overlooked why he was doing that, he included a link to a political fundraising Web site. We have always kept law enforcement—the FBI Director, the Attorney General, anybody in law enforcement—out of politics. For a Senator to tweet that we have to block this person, and oh, by the way, here is where you can contribute to a political campaign—that is wrong.

It seems likely the Senate will have to file a cloture motion to vote to overcome the filibuster of her nomination. That is unprecedented; it is unwarranted. No other Attorney General nomination in our history has ever been met with a filibuster. We have never needed to have a cloture vote on an Attorney General nomination. Yet it seems Republican leadership wants to make history for all the wrong reasons.

I mention this to give us an idea. President George Bush in the last 2 years of his term—now a lame-duck President—nominated Michael Mukasey for Attorney General.

Michael Mukasey was being sent because the last Attorney General had done a disastrous job—even though he had been voted for by, I think, all Republicans—people will accept the fact now that he politicized the prosecutors' offices and everything else, and finally the Bush administration had to get rid of him.

I had just become chairman again, as Democrats had taken back the Senate. I moved Attorney General Mukasey through even though I did not support him. I felt the President should have a vote on his Attorney General. I moved him through in record time.

She has waited so much more time, multiple times longer than Mukasey.

This is especially troubling and unfair because Ms. Lynch's qualifications for the job are so extraordinary. And her life story is equally extraordinary. Born in Greensboro and raised in Durham, NC, Loretta Lynch is the daughter of a fourth-generation Baptist preacher and a school librarian. They instilled in her the American values of fairness and equality, even when those around them were not living up to those values. Ms. Lynch has spoken about riding on her father's shoulders to their church where students organized peaceful protests against racial segregation. The freedom songs and the church music that went hand-in-hand with those protests undoubtedly made up the soundtrack of her childhood. The Judiciary Committee was honored to have her father, Rev. Lorenzo Lynch, with us not only at both days of her historic hearing in January but also with us when the committee considered his daughter's nomination in February.

When Loretta Lynch was a young child, Reverend Lynch bravely opened his church's basement to the students and others who organized lunch counter sit-ins in North Carolina. He taught his only daughter that "ideals

are wonderful things, but unless you can share them with others and make this world a better place, they're just words." The fact that she has dedicated the majority of her career to public service reaffirms that she has lived those ideals of justice in the service of others. And yet, Senate Republicans appear intent on preventing her from continuing her service—service that we should be honored to have.

Two weekends ago, Ms. Lynch traveled to Selma to honor the 50th anniversary of the historic march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, where scores of courageous Americans were beaten and trampled on Bloody Sunday because they refused to be silent about the need for equal protection under the law. It was a weekend when both Democrats and Republicans came together. President Obama stood there with President George W. Bush beside him, who had signed the last Voting Rights Act. They honored the civil rights activists of 50 years ago.

But I also felt it was a time to reaffirm our shared commitment to Americans, as Americans, and the ideals of justice and equality that so many of our predecessors have fought and bled for, from our Founding Fathers to the foot soldiers for justice on that bridge in Selma.

Loretta Lynch embodies these ideals. She has devoted her career to making them a reality. It is time for Republicans and Democrats to come together to confirm this outstanding woman to be the next Attorney General. It is time to stop delaying and making excuses for how she is being treated. It is time to vote.

This is reflecting badly on all law enforcement. I hear from so many in law enforcement saying: Why are you politicizing this nomination? Republicans and Democrats have usually kept law enforcement out of politics. Why is this?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired. Senators are limited to 10 minutes each.

Mr. LEAHY. Are we on the trafficking act?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. No, we are in morning business.

Mr. LEAHY. When do we go on the trafficking act?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business has expired.

Mr. LEAHY. I seek recognition.

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 resume consideration of S. 178, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

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

Pending:

Portman amendment No. 270, to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to enable State child protective services systems to improve the identification and assessment of child victims of sex trafficking.

Portman amendment No. 271, to amend the definition of "homeless person" under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to include certain homeless children and youth.

Vitter amendment No. 284 (to amendment No. 271), to amend section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify those classes of individuals born in the United States who are nationals and citizens of the United States at birth.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, earlier this month, two Florida men were charged with human trafficking. They drugged a runaway 16-year-old girl. Then they forced her to have sex with up to 10 men a day. They sold her to men in a gas station bathroom. They sold her on the street and they sold her in the back of a car.

She was 16 years old. She had run away from home. She was terribly vulnerable. They promised her food, then they beat her, drugged her, and sold her. When she escaped, they tracked her down, beat her, and sold her again.

All of us—I think we should have an agreement that Democrats and Republicans alike must remember the many other survivors of this heinous crime.

We have been working for almost 1 year on bipartisan proposals to protect these vulnerable children, count the survivors, and then punish those who put them through this hell. This effort had strong bipartisan support until partisan politics was injected into the debate.

The fight against human trafficking should not be made into a partisan issue to score political points. That is unfortunately where we are today. Everyone expected this legislation to move smoothly through the Senate, I know I did, just as it did through the House. Instead, Senate Republicans have turned away from a comprehensive solution that can garner broad support.

I am deeply saddened by this partisan fight. It is both destructive and unnecessary. It is destructive because it threatens to derail important legislation that would make a difference in the lives of survivors—such as the 16-year-old girl in Florida.

This partisan fight is unnecessary because abortion politics have no place in this debate. Congress has a long history of passing legislation to address human trafficking. We have consistently done so without abortion politics being injected into the discussion.

I know we have passed the Violence Against Women Act. We included a trafficking amendment of mine in that. While I was disappointed that a number of my Republican colleagues voted against the Violence Against Women Act, which had the sex trafficking