

The United States, along with the international community, has a long tradition of upholding international norms, including holding accountable those guilty of crimes against humanity and war crimes. The international community cannot stand by and allow the murder of innocent men, women, and children to go unchallenged. He must immediately bring Assad and all the perpetrators of gross human rights violations in Syria to justice. This cannot wait another year.

Earlier this week, I reintroduced the Syrian War Crimes Accountability Act, along with my colleagues Senators RUBIO, MENENDEZ, SHAHEEN, and PETERS. This bipartisan legislation establishes a Syria-specific standard of reporting and accountability for crimes against humanity. The bill will require the U.S. State Department to report to relevant congressional committees on war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Syria. This would include an account of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the regime of President Bashar al-Assad and violent extremist groups and other combatants involved in the conflict.

Today, as I stand on the floor of the Senate, the violence is continuing unabated.

Some of my colleagues may be aware of a Syrian defector and photographer named Caesar. Caesar fled from Syria in 2013 with more than 55,000 photos documenting the torture and murder of more than 11,000 civilians. Last week, some of those photos were put on display at the United Nations.

We must shine a light on the atrocities that have been committed in Syria and demand accountability. Ignoring these violations sends a message to the global community that war crimes and crimes against humanity are tolerable. The Syrian people deserve much more than that.

On this fourth anniversary of the beginning of the Syrian war, we must recommit to supporting the Syrian people through humanitarian efforts and by holding those individuals and groups which are guilty of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity accountable for their atrocities.

I ask my colleagues to stand with the Syrian people and join me in supporting the Syrian War Crimes Accountability Act.

#### LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. President, I will also take time to urge my colleagues to immediately bring Loretta Lynch's nomination to the floor of the U.S. Senate to be the next Attorney General of the United States.

Ms. Lynch currently serves as the Senate-confirmed U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York. She has already been confirmed by the U.S. Senate. She served with great distinction as the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District.

I had the chance to visit with her last January and talk to her firsthand

about her vision to be the next Attorney General of the United States. She is extremely impressive, very well qualified, and has the right values to be the Attorney General of the United States.

I will give a few examples. I know all of us are concerned about equal justice to the law. Well, Ms. Lynch has lived that through her own personal commitments. At Harvard Law School, she was a member of the Legal Aid Bureau, helping people who otherwise would not have been able to afford access to our legal system.

Ms. Lynch has a long and distinguished record of prosecuting terrorists, sex traffickers, organized crime cartels, corrupt politicians, and dangerous gangs. She has been endorsed by a wide variety of law enforcement agencies and individuals.

Put it this way: I have not heard anyone question her qualifications. I have not heard anyone question why she should not be confirmed to be the next Attorney General of the country.

Loretta Lynch's nomination has been pending on the Senate floor as long as the five most recent Attorneys General combined. If we take five of the most recent Attorneys General and add all the time it took for their nominations to be confirmed, Loretta Lynch is now exceeding that. That is not fair.

President Obama is entitled to have his team in place, and we have a responsibility to vote on his nominations. Let's do the right thing and take up this nomination, debate it, and then have Senators vote up or down, not maybe, on her nomination. We owe it to Ms. Lynch, the employees of the Justice Department, and the American people to have a newly designated Attorney General in place as the Nation's chief law enforcement officer and top defender of Americans' constitutional rights.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in 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.

#### BISHOP GORMAN HIGH SCHOOL 60TH DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to honor the 60th anniversary of Bishop Gorman High School in Las Vegas, NV.

In 1954, Bishop Gorman High School opened as the first Catholic high school

in Southern Nevada. I congratulate the institution on 60 years of leading our country in first-rate education while positively implementing Catholic values.

Bishop Gorman High School has graduated more than 9,000 students and currently has a 100 percent graduation rate and a college bound rate of 96 percent, making Bishop Gorman a national leader in college preparatory education. The school is equipped with an impressively experienced and credited faculty, with nearly 70 percent holding advanced degrees. The administration and the faculty's dedication to providing excellent education in a Catholic setting, in addition to a low student-teacher ratio, has contributed to Bishop Gorman's success and helped ensure that its students can reach their full potential.

The school takes pride in providing its students with a well-rounded education that includes strong academic principles, faith, and competitive athletic opportunities. Over the past 60 years, students have won 97 State athletic championships and received State and national recognition in academics, fine arts, and extracurricular activities.

Bishop Gorman High School also gives back to the local community and the State. Every year they organize multiple service events, and this past year, art students designed a beautiful courtyard for a transitional home in Las Vegas. Additionally, the National Honor Society students volunteered each week at a local food bank.

I applaud Bishop Gorman High School President John Kilduff and Principal Kevin Kiefer for their strong leadership and recognize this year's Knight of the Gaels honoree, Jack Raftery, Sr. I am pleased that through your joint efforts and the dedication of those before you, this remarkable institution has been a part of our community for 60 years. Best wishes for continued success, and congratulations on this great achievement.

#### BLACK WOMEN'S HISTORY WEEK

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I request that the U.S. government officially recognizes the last week in March as Black Women's History Week. During the week of March 23, as part of Women's History Month and in honor of the U.N. declaration of 2015 as the decade of Afro descendants, this week marks the perfect occasion on which to begin an annual recognition and celebration of Black women's history and contributions to American society.

Black women have long gone above and beyond the call of duty in their contributions to American society through civic engagement, high voter turnout, and stepping up as leaders and bulwarks in their communities. Even in the face of grave oppression throughout our Nation's history, Black women have continued to stand strong

and contribute to the well-being of their families, communities, and our country as a whole. A recognition of Black Women's History Week on the part of the Obama Administration and Congress would send a critical message that the government wishes to elevate their role in history and contemporary society and recognizes the unique struggles they continue to experience today.

Black women have consistently played a critical role in this Nation's history, often with little thanks or recognition. Harriet Tubman escaped slavery and bravely returned to the enslaved South 13 times to herald her people to freedom on the Underground Railroad. A century later, Rosa Parks witnessed the oppression of her people—specifically her fellow Black sisters—and took an active role in organizing the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Today, a Black woman is our nation's First Lady. Recognition of Black Women's History Week would honor and uplift the sacrifices of women such as Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks, who paved the way for Barack and Michelle Obama to reach the White House, and me to address you on their behalf today.

Yet at the same time that Black women from our Nation's history have become inspirational symbols of strength and perseverance, Black women today continue to face the necessity to persevere through undue burdens as they navigate American society. They must try to hold their families together as primary caregivers when family members are incarcerated or killed, support their children as they grow up in food deserts and attend failing schools, they must continue to persevere when our society does not provide them with adequate support and equal rights. All the while, many Black women struggle to forward their own careers and provide for their families. Recent U.S. Department of Labor data shows that while job prospects are improving for nearly every group in America, one glaring exception remains: Black women. Since August 2013, Black women are the only group for whom unemployment rates have not fallen.

Karen McLeod's experience as a 59-year-old college graduate with two degrees who cannot find steady employment sheds light on the economic tribulations many Black women face. Karen went from making \$30 per hour as a respiratory therapist to \$16 per hour at a nonprofit, to \$8.67 per hour, working only 4 hours per week. In her current circumstances, she has had to make a series of tough decisions to get by. Karen sold her jewelry to pay for gas, pawned her television for food, and was forced to ask local nonprofits for rent assistance. Karen's story represents the experiences of a growing number of Black women, whose conditions are not improving with economic recovery. White House recognition of Black Women's History Week will

serve to acknowledge and call attention to the continued struggles Black women face in our society today and will send the critical message that their government cares about what they are going through.

This year, a coalition of organizations advocating for the well-being of women and communities of color will partner to elevate the stories, histories, and realities of Black women's lives. Each day of the week, starting on March 23 and continuing through March 29, will focus on a different issue Black women face in American society today, from economic disparities to educational achievement to police violence. Exploring these issues and acknowledging the centrality of Black women to our history and social fabric, along with recognizing the uniquely gendered and racialized inequities they face, is critical as we seek to extend equal rights to all Americans. I hope and request that this will be the first year in what will become an annual tradition of celebration and intentional recognition of our sisters through Black Women's History Week.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO DON SHORT

• Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today, I would like to recognize an exceptional Iowan who has been devoted to the State and to our agricultural heritage. After serving as president of Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area since 2001, Don Short has announced his retirement.

Don Short was raised in Winthrop, IA, where he took over the family farm. From early on, Don has dedicated his efforts to farming and agricultural policy. He was employed with Moews Seed Company, a family owned business since 1927 that specializes in corn seed production. Afterward, Don worked for DuPont Seed Company.

Don's experiences in agriculture have provided him the insight necessary to lead the Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area. For 15 years, he has been able to protect and promote natural, cultural, and historic areas. He spearheaded efforts to maintain and strengthen the Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area and has been a dogged advocate on its behalf. He is a farmer whose desire is to keep agricultural heritage alive through partnerships, such as historic sites, tourist attractions, and businesses that bring economic benefits to Iowa.

I want to congratulate Don Short on his retirement and his success over the years. Silos and Smokestacks will no doubt miss his daily contributions; however, he plans on remaining a consultant on a parttime basis. I thank him for his unwavering commitment to improving agricultural policies and making Iowa a better place.●

#### REMEMBERING WILLIAM DAVID ROTH

• Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I wish to speak today in remembrance of William David Roth, who passed away on March 17, 2015.

William "Bill" David Roth, 71, of Albany, NY, lived an extraordinary life and made major contributions to U.S. public policy. He was the son of Dr. Oscar Roth and Dr. Stefanie Zeimer Roth, refugees from Vienna who arrived in the United States just prior to the onset of World War II. Bill graduated magna cum laude from Yale University in 1964 after majoring in mathematics, economics, and politics. This is all the more remarkable given the fact that a neuromuscular disorder from the age of 8 left him unable to write. He performed complex mathematical equations and logical formulae in his head. He was also a formidable presence at Yale and later at the University of California, Berkeley, where he received his Ph.D. in 1970. He was that rare person who was both a man of thought and action and who inspired others by overcoming great odds and obstacles. From 1971 to 1972 he taught political science at the University of Vermont. He very well may have averted a Kent State tragedy in 1972 by permitting himself to be arrested at the Federal building in downtown Burlington during a nonviolent student protest against the Vietnam war. While Roth was offered immediate release because of his disability, he chose instead to remain until all the students had been released from the Burlington city jail. In this way he showed one of the virtues of civil disobedience, conducted with dignity and without violence, thus serving as an example and inspiration to others.

Subsequently, he went to work on the Carnegie Council on Children in Connecticut. He coauthored a landmark book that dealt searchingly with children with disabilities. His first major work was called "The Unexpected Minority: Handicapped Children in America." He also coauthored "The Grand Illusion: Stigma, Role-expectations, and Communication." These are widely acknowledged as providing the analytical basis for the disability rights movement as well as fostering a new academic discipline, disability studies.

Bill's work emphasized the disability movement's core vision: the most socially incapacitating aspects of disability are not the inescapable consequence of biology but the result of countless social decisions that do not acknowledge the needs of people with different bodies and, indeed, discriminate against people whose bodies are different. Bill went on to pioneer the use of computer technology for people with disabilities and in 1984 founded the Center for Computing and Disability at SUNY, Albany, one of the first such centers in the Nation. Bill was widely acknowledged through his scholarly research, technological