

A bill (H.R. 636) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend increased expensing limitations, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 644) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend and expand the charitable deduction for contributions of food inventory.

A bill (H.R. 1295) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve the process for making determinations with respect to whether organizations are exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(4) of such Code.

A bill (H.R. 1314) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations.

A bill (S. 984) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide Medicare beneficiary access to eye tracking accessories for speech generating devices and to remove the rental cap for durable medical equipment under the Medicare Program with respect to speech generating devices.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading, and I object to my own request, all en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The measures will receive their second reading on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, APRIL 20,
2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 2 p.m., Monday, April 20; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; and that following leader remarks, the Senate then resume consideration of S. 178.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senators SULLIVAN and LEE for up to 10 minutes each.

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

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I wish to say a few words on the nuclear agreement that is being negotiated with Iran. I will start by commending

the members of the Foreign Relations Committee, particularly Senator CORKER, the chairman of that committee. They moved the Corker-Menendez bill through the committee a few days ago with a unanimous vote. It was very important work. It is a good start to a critically important topic for the American people. I know it was a struggle. We read about what happened in the press. But it is important to recognize that it was a struggle that should not have been.

The Obama administration put tremendous pressure on Members of this body—Democratic Members of this body—not to allow the U.S. Senate to have any say on this issue, one of the most important foreign policy issues facing the country right now. They did not want the American people to have a voice. In fact, last month when the bill was released, the President vowed to veto it. He backed off only when it was clear that members of the committee, Republicans and Democrats, stood firm against the President and with the American people. Then the President knew he would fail and his veto threat would likely be overridden.

So the President, under pressure, dispatched Secretary of State John Kerry, a former Member of this body, to give me and my colleagues here in the Senate a closed-door preview of these negotiations in this framework agreement. I sat through the meeting and had some discussions with the Secretary. It was useful, but think about it—it was a closed-door briefing. Why not involve the American people?

This is not an issue which is about the Senate or the Congress per se, as we often read in the paper. This is an issue about the American people, who have a voice through us, their representatives in Congress, and should have a say on one of the most critical foreign policy issues facing the United States right now. And, remember, we know this. We were sent here. The people are wise. The citizens of this country are wise. They understand national security. Many of them are in the military. Many of them have sons and daughters in the military. Many of them are veterans. They know what sacrifice is. They know what national security is. They sent us here so their voices could be heard, particularly on issues of national security and on issues of the security of the country they love.

Make no mistake, Americans are overwhelmingly interested in making sure that they, through their representatives in Congress, have a say in this important deal. A recent USA TODAY-Suffolk University poll showed that a whopping 72 percent of Americans think Congress should have a role in approving the nuclear negotiations with Iran.

What is very interesting about this is that once upon a time, even President Obama, Secretary of State John Kerry, and former Senator Clinton all believed this body should have a role in

such important agreements. They said Congress should approve any sweeping deals. In 2007 and 2008, they cosponsored a bill that required congressional approval of any long-term security commitment President Bush made to Iraq.

Vice President BIDEN—then-Senator BIDEN—put it then:

The president cannot make such a sweeping commitment on his own authority. Congress must grant approval.

Those were wise words then, and I believe they are wise words today. Why is that? One reason is that when the executive branch and the Congress work together, we are stronger on issues of foreign policy and national security. Think about all of the different times in which this body, through treaties and other agreements, worked with Presidents of both parties—bipartisan—to make sure we were speaking strongly together on critical issues of national security. I served under Condoleezza Rice as an Assistant Secretary of State and worked on these kinds of issues—sanctions on Iran and terrorist finance issues—and I saw that when the executive branch worked with the Congress, we were stronger.

As I mentioned, when then-Senator BIDEN mentioned these words about congressional approval, they were wise words. Yet, now the Vice President, Secretary Kerry, and President Obama—all former Members of this body—are ignoring their own previous advice and previous wisdom, and they are ignoring the American people in the process through their representatives in Congress.

Where does that leave us today? My own view is that the President should have reached out to the Congress from the very beginning and said that he wanted to work with us and have our approval on this important agreement so we could be stronger as a country, the executive branch and the Congress working together, unified, to enhance America's national security.

The President should have looked to the Congress and the Constitution when considering this potential agreement—whether the biggest state sponsor of terrorism in the world should get a nuclear weapon and when—and realized this was an important enough national security issue and said: I am going to submit this as a treaty. He should have been willing to make the case to the American people and convince two-thirds of the Senate to vote for this agreement, as required by the Constitution. But he chose another path. He chose the “go it alone” path where even just a few weeks ago the administration signaled that it was not going to show the agreement—the key annexes of this agreement—to the Congress and that any attempts to force him to do so would be vetoed. That was a mistake. That is a mistake, and we are starting to change that.

In these kinds of matters, the U.S. State Department urges any administration—Republican or Democratic—to

use the utmost caution when deciding how to deal with international treaties on key foreign policy issues and the Congress.

I have a quote from the State Department guidelines:

In determining whether any international agreement should be brought into force as a treaty or as an international agreement other than a treaty, the utmost care is to be exercised to avoid any invasion or compromise of the constitutional powers of the President, the Senate, and the Congress as a whole.

That is the State Department—"the utmost care." But the Obama administration did not take the utmost care in this matter. In fact, their goal has been to shut out the American people on this deal.

So what are we doing? The Congress is having to force the President to let the American people be heard. That is what we are doing, and I believe in many ways that is sad. The President is clearly not abiding by the advice he gave when he was a Senator on these kinds of issues, and neither is the Vice President, so the Congress acted.

The Corker-Menendez bill that passed the Foreign Relations Committee, which will be debated soon on this floor, at least gives us an up-or-down vote, and it will enable us to actually see some of the classified annexes that are part of this agreement. Again, it is not us, it is the American people. It is the people we represent.

I urge my colleagues to practice what the State Department has said is the utmost care on these kinds of issues. We need to look hard at whatever agreement is finalized and brought to this body, and we need to work hard to cut through the clutter and opaque language, unclear language, and conflicting views of this agreement—the way in which this administration is describing this deal right now.

I will give one example. Let's take the phrase "snapped back." Right now, the American people are being told that if Iran violates the terms of this agreement, the sanctions, which have been key to this entire agreement and imposed on Iran by this body four different times, can quickly and automatically be snapped back. That is a fantasy. President Obama knows that sanctions—particularly international sanctions—cannot just be snapped back. But it is a great phrase. It sounds good, but it is a fantasy.

As I mentioned, as a former Assistant Secretary of State, I worked with the Congress and other members of the executive branch to go around to different countries in the world and strongly encourage them to divest out of Iran, out of the Iranian oil and gas sector. In many ways, we said: If you don't take action and divest out of Iran, it is very likely that the Congress will sanction you. We worked with the Congress. This was executive branch and congressional branch cooperation, making us stronger as a nation because it worked.

Many of these companies started to divest. It weakened Iran, but this took years. There was no snap involved. This was a slog, but it was successful. It was successful because this body was very intimately involved. The President knows this. Secretary Kerry knows this. But the fact that they are willing to say "Don't worry, sanctions will be snapped back in an instant" should otherwise make us all nervous.

The administration needs to explain to the American people how this snap-back will work. Think about it. If sanctions are lifted, millions, probably billions of dollars are going to flow from European companies, countries; Asian companies, countries; Russian; Chinese. They are going to flow into Iran. They are going to invest in businesses. They are going to invest in the oil and gas sector. They are going to invest in banks. And then we are going to snap that back if there is a violation, automatically, in a couple of days? It is not going to happen. It is a catchy phrase with no substance.

The administration needs to explain it. The American people need to know what is at stake. The Secretary and the President need to be clear with the American people on exactly what is in this agreement. They need to level with the American people. As we move forward, as we think about how we are going to analyze, look at, vote on this agreement, they must tell the American people the truth.

We must start to think about some of these issues. Let's start with a couple of things that are very important for the American people to know, and the American people do know them.

Let's start by recognizing that Iran is the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism.

Let's recognize that Iran has consistently lied and cheated with regard to its nuclear weapons program, including even recently, during these negotiations.

Let's recognize that Iran will not—will not—stand down from its stated goal that many of its leaders still state today, which is that they want to wipe Israel off the map.

Let's recognize that Iran is responsible—and this is very important to recognize and understand—for the maiming and killing of likely thousands of U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines in Iraq by supplying Shia militias there with the most sophisticated, the most lethal IED on the battlefield, called an EFP, an explosively formed projectile. If a person was in Iraq as a U.S. military member and that person was in a vehicle that hit one of these IEDs, that person was either going to be killed or seriously maimed. This is something I witnessed during my time as a staff officer to the commanding general of the U.S. Central Command when I was in Iraq as a marine.

Let's recognize that from what we know right now in terms of this deal, Iran doesn't appear to have given up

much at all. They will keep thousands of nuclear centrifuges. They will keep their missile development programs. They will keep their nuclear infrastructure. They will continue to support and sponsor terrorism around the world—the largest state sponsor of terrorism.

The American people need to know that if we do lift sanctions—and it is not clear when we are going to lift them; the Iranians are saying we are going to lift them right away—if we do lift sanctions, Iran will very likely use the millions of dollars that will flood into their economy to pump up their terror machine around the world and likely target our citizens. The American people need to understand all of this as we go forward.

Maybe the administration disagrees on some of these points. Maybe they don't think these points are the aspects of the deal. And if none of this is true, then let Secretary Kerry and his team come forward to the Congress and make the case in public to the American people that this isn't the case, that this is a deal which will keep us safe, that this is a deal with a regime that is trustworthy. Let them make that case.

The Congress needs to be very involved, and we are involved because of the respect for the people we represent.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Utah.

COMMEMORATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATTACK ON THE ALFRED P. MURRAH FEDERAL BUILDING

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 139, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 139) commemorating the 20th anniversary of the attack on the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 139) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

REMEMBERING NORM BANGERTER

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Gov. Norm Bangerter, who