

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on an amendment that I was pleased to include in the human trafficking legislation that was passed earlier today. The amendment was based on the Human Trafficking Survivors Relief and Empowerment Act, which I introduced several weeks ago.

It has a simple purpose. It provides an incentive for States to enact laws that allow human trafficking survivors to clear their criminal records of prostitution and other low-level, non-violent crimes that they can reasonably demonstrate were the result of being trafficked.

Many States, including my home State of New Hampshire, have vacatur laws in place. However, we need to ensure that survivors of human trafficking have access to these types of protections no matter where they are rescued, or what State they were forced to commit crimes in.

When I first introduced this legislation, I shared the story of a young woman named Katie featured in a recent NPR story on vacatur laws. In the story, she spoke about her heart-breaking experience as a trafficking victim.

Katie talked about being raped at age 11, and at age 13 being forced into commercial sex.

She talked about having her skull cracked and ribs broken, and about the regular beatings that resulted in bruises and black eyes. She talked about 7 years of the worst kinds of physical and emotional torture, and being transported nearly 1,400 miles from her home.

But Katie also talked about her recovery—about rebuilding a life with her family and young son, about working hard to make a better life.

According to Katie, one of the most important things we can do for these survivors, these brave young men and women, is to give them the tools to start over.

As Katie told NPR, “I’m not ever going to forget what I’ve done, but at the same time, I don’t want it thrown in my face every time I’m trying to seek employment.”

Survivors of human trafficking are victims of a crime. Yet often it is the victims who are arrested, detained, prosecuted, and convicted.

Records of these crimes, can follow survivors for life. These records limit access to safe housing and good jobs. They can even bar access to car loans and educational opportunities. They leave trafficking survivors with few options, and in some cases drive individuals back to engaging in commercial sex.

Vacatur laws help victims start fresh. They are a critical part of recovery

and should be available in every State, and my amendment will help us achieve that goal.

I will close by sharing comments that Katie’s mom recently sent to my office. It think it clearly demonstrates what is possible when survivors are given the time and support they need to recover.

She wrote:

As a mother and as a woman watching all those years, being totally overwhelmed by hopelessness AND helplessness, I can see a positive . . . I think the 11 year old girl I lost is coming back to me . . . as a woman—a little battle weary but stronger and happier and filled with so much hope.

We want this kind of new beginning for every victim of trafficking. And that is exactly what this provision will help accomplish. I want to thank my colleagues for their support, and hope this bill will move quickly through the House and to the President for signature into law.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, widely recognized as the first genocide of the 20th century.

April 24, 1915 marked the beginning of a horrific period in our world’s history and for the Armenian people. On this day, agents of the Ottoman Empire rounded up and executed Armenian community leaders, poets, and intellectuals. What ensued was the systematic extermination of 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children at the hands of the Ottoman Turkish government. From 1915 to 1923, the world witnessed the attempted destruction of the Armenian people for no reason other than their very existence.

Unfortunately, the events surrounding the Armenian genocide are fraught with denial. But the case is simple. When Raphael Lemkin coined the term “genocide” in the 1940s, he had what happened to the Armenians in mind as a definitive example.

Those who perished experienced some of the worst aspects of humanity. But the campaign to exterminate the Armenian people failed. And those who survived embodied the best qualities of the human spirit: hope, resilience, perseverance, and love. Some survivors made their way to America, and many of them built their new lives in Michigan. They have created thriving communities, built businesses, raised families, and contributed to the fabric of what makes the State of Michigan so great. Their descendants carry on these values, and the richness of their culture is part of what gives vibrancy to our State.

The Armenians in Michigan boast a community of well over 20,000. It is the largest in the Midwest, and I am proud to represent them. To commemorate the 100th anniversary, Michigan’s Armenian community has organized a

number of events, lectures, art exhibits, concerts, and vigils to remember the victims of the genocide, to educate their communities, and to look to the future. I applaud their efforts to preserve their culture and identity.

Over the last century, the Armenians of Michigan erected churches, established community centers, and built a day school. They also founded educational centers such as the Armenian Research Center at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. International language and linguistics courses at Wayne State University are located in Manoogian Hall, which was named after the notable Detroit-Armenian philanthropist and businessman Alex Manoogian. These are just part of the Armenian community’s contributions to Michigan.

While Armenians have found prosperity in their new home, they have not forgotten those who did not live to see what the future held for their people. Many of Michigan’s Armenian community members have written books and recorded accounts of what happened to their families in 1915 in an effort to shed light and increase awareness. These stories will carry on for generations, and remind us all that if we do not recognize the atrocities of the past we risk blinding ourselves to the atrocities that could still occur today.

Charging toward a peaceful future requires making peace with the past. Denial does not serve our American values. Denial minimizes the great tragedy that fell upon the victims, the survivors, and their descendants. Over 40 States have affirmed the Armenian genocide, including Michigan. I have called on, and will continue to call on, the President to formally recognize that the atrocities committed against the Armenian people were in fact genocide.

Recognition of the Armenian genocide is long overdue. A crime like this casts a long shadow. This shadow can be conquered only by light—the light of truth that comes from fully acknowledging the full scale of the horror that the Armenians endured.

EARTH DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today is Earth Day, and on Earth Day it is important for all of us to reflect not only on how human activity impacts the environment but also how those impacts on the environment affect people.

Unfortunately, one of the impacts of climate change that is increasingly being documented by the military and intelligence communities is that climate change is a threat to our national security. This threat takes many forms. Perhaps the simplest manifestation is the threat of sea level rise on the Pentagon’s 700 coastal facilities. Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia is the largest naval base in the world, but the station and the surrounding community is being inundated by coastal

flooding from sea level rise. Norfolk is experiencing high tides 1½ feet higher than it did a century ago. This has already caused the naval base to have to abandon some piers, but perhaps the real worry is how flooding could prevent sailors from reaching the base during a weather event. One local minister quipped to the Washington Post that the local church that is now up for sale faced the prospect of putting “the tide chart on their Web site” so people would know whether they could get to church.

Norfolk and the Navy are exploring various solutions, including a costly flood gate proposal, but the reality is that Naval Station Norfolk and U.S. Navy infrastructure around the world is at threat around the world, and in a time of tightening budgets, that can have real impacts on military readiness.

A similar problem exists in my home State, in Annapolis, home to the U.S. Naval Academy. NOAA’s 2014 “Sea Level Rise and Nuisance Flood Frequency Changes Around the United States” found that “Annapolis and Baltimore, Maryland, lead the list with an increase in number of flood days of more than 920 percent since 1960.” NOAA goes on to conclude that sea level rise in the waters of the Chesapeake Bay is the cause of these “nuisance flooding” events.

On Monday, I visited the Patuxent River Naval Air Station in Southern Maryland on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay. I raised the issue of how sea level rise is expected to affect the important work this installation does to ensure our Navy’s defense preparedness and aircraft testing and what sort of preparation and mitigation work they were doing to meet these imminent challenges.

Critical to the function of Pax River’s operations is that the base be located at sea level, so if sea level is changing, even by just a few feet, they have to account for these changes and essentially raise the base. Fortunately, the Navy is already putting a lot of thought into this issue; however, the infrastructure adaptation and mitigation projects that are essential to keeping our military prepared are coming at the expense of the taxpayer.

Climate change is also a threat to national security because it can serve as a threat multiplier. For as long as there have been humans, there has been conflict over resources, especially when those resources are scarce and essential. Many national security and defense experts have commented on how climate change’s impacts on food production, freshwater resources, and the destruction of critical infrastructure is contributing to political instability in a number of countries, particularly in developing countries where political leadership is already tenuous.

As former colonel and current Department of Defense consultant Pete Newell put it, “As a precursor to conflict, lack of access to basic human

needs is a major driver and it’s only getting worse.”

Prolonged drought and other serious environmental disasters are also made more likely in a warming world, and these kinds of conditions can overwhelm governments and cause government collapse.

The potential of conflict, radicalism, and terrorism are heightened when states fail.

Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Michael Mullen, was quoted in the DOD’s 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review:

The scarcity of and potential competition for resources . . . compounded by the influx of refugees . . . creates conditions of hopelessness that could lead to failed states and make populations vulnerable to radicalization.

CNA Corporation’s Military Advisory Board issued a 2014 report titled “National Security and the Accelerating Risks of Climate Change” calling for political leadership to address the causes and impacts of climate change:

The national security risks of projected climate change are as serious as any challenges we have faced . . . Political posturing and budgetary woes cannot be allowed to inhibit discussion and debate over what so many believe to be a salient national security concern for our nation.

Scholars at U.C. Santa Barbara and Columbia University have shown how Syria is an example of how climate change can help create conditions that lead to conflict. The ongoing tragedy of ISIS cannot be explained by any one single cause, but studies are pointing to climate change as an important factor.

Between 2006 and 2010, Syria experienced its worst drought in decades. Reportedly this caused crop failure on 60 percent of Syria’s arable land and the country lost 80 percent of its head of cattle.

Rural farmers had nowhere to go but to Syria’s cities. Syria’s Government, which was already dealing with 1 million displaced people from Iraq, was overwhelmed by an influx of 1 million people internally displaced by drought.

As we know all too well from recent history, failed states and the chaotic conditions within them are breeding grounds of terrorism and radicalism such as that practiced by ISIS.

Climate change helped create stresses on the Syrian Government it could not handle, and its collapse has helped lead to the emergence of ISIS.

Leaders and experts attribute other global conflicts to climate change. Ban Ki-moon holds that violence in Darfur was sparked by a decline in rainfall that devastated cattle herds. Others believe that the 2011 Arab spring relates to heat waves that forced cereal-exporting countries to take grain off the global market.

A severe drought in the Horn of Africa has starved off tens of thousands of Somalis, and many more are on the brink of starvation in crowded refugee camps nearby. This displacement and desperation can only compound other

crises and issues, such as civil conflict, fragile societies, and underdevelopment.

Many Pacific Island nations, such as Kiribati and Tuvalu, are being swallowed up by the ocean.

While no single extreme weather event can be attributed to climate change, and the Earth has certainly experienced hurricanes and cyclones since the dawn of time, what is worth noting is the trend in increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events is clear. Since 2000, there have been 18 category 5 hurricanes and cyclones—18 storms in the last 14 years. The previous 18 category 5 storms occurred over a 39-year period from 1961 to 2000. In other words, the phenomenon is becoming a more common occurrence in our world.

Last month, Cyclone Pam quite literally leveled the island nation of Vanuatu in the South Pacific. An overwhelming majority of the island’s structures were destroyed. As the days went on and the media began to lose focus on the humanitarian crisis that was unfolding, access to food and freshwater became increasingly difficult for the people of Vanuatu. Foreign aid has slowly made its way to the stricken people of Vanuatu. The World Health Organization has noted a rise in illnesses related to lack of access to safe drinking water and exposure to mosquito-borne diseases.

We must remain mindful of the pace and quality of recovery efforts in Vanuatu. Cyclone Pam has created a situation that could very easily destabilize the government if conditions on the ground in Vanuatu do not continue to improve.

Extremist organizations feed on instability and chaos, and if the people of Vanuatu feel their government is not adequately addressing their needs in a timely fashion, concerned nations need to be vigilant of what forces may take hold.

As climate change worsens, more countries may become vulnerable to its effects. Lack of food, water, and living space is displacing and killing people.

To protect our national security, we need to listen to the Department of Defense and an emerging group of scholars who are showing the connections between climate change and conflict. That means heeding the warnings of humanitarian need, providing adequate aid to maintain stability during crises, and helping vulnerable countries build resilient infrastructure. But most fundamentally it means we need to fight climate change. Global warming pollution is harming our planet, harming nature, and endangering wildlife.

But Earth Day is not just about the Earth; it is also about the people inhabit it. Let’s remember the most severe human impacts of climate, its impacts on our national security, and avert the worst affects of global warming.

Let’s do justice to Earth Day and make fighting climate change a true national priority.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE SAINTS JOHN NEUMANN AND MARIA GORETTI HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM

• Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the Saints John Neumann and Maria Goretti High School girls varsity basketball team from Philadelphia, PA. After an undefeated 2014–2015 season, the Neumann-Goretti Lady Saints achieved the No. 1 rank in the Nation and were named the national champions of all high school basketball teams. This remarkable achievement demonstrates the fortitude and talent of the team, its leadership and the school.

Under head coach Andrea Peterson, the Lady-Saints dominated their regular season, securing their playoff berth when they earned their second consecutive Philadelphia Catholic League Championship. The Lady-Saints continued their streak, winning the PIAA District XII AA City Championship and earning a top seed in the Pennsylvania State tournament.

After earning wins with large margins in all four rounds of the Pennsylvania State tournament, the Neumann-Goretti team entered the State championship game against the Seton-La-Salle Rebels of Pittsburgh. Dominating the game with a score of 79–34, the Lady Saints earned the Pennsylvania State championship title. This monumental season resulted in national recognition by USA TODAY, ESPN, CBS MaxPreps, and Blue Star Media. The team was also named team of the year for the Philadelphia and Southeastern Pennsylvania region by the Philadelphia Inquirer.

I am proud to join the city of Philadelphia in celebrating the performance of senior players Ciani Cryor, Sianni Martin, A.J. Timbers, Christina Aborowa, Melanie Schoofield, Kaschae Harris, and honorary team member Amanda Brett. I also congratulate returning players Felicia Aiyeotan, Erica Brown, Minika Glenn, Jabria Ingram, Alisha Kebbe, Jada Russell, Kamiah Smalls, Jaylen Durrett, Shayla Green, Daijah Parmley, and Chyna Wooten. I wish all of these players well as they continue their academic careers.

The Neumann-Goretti Lady-Saints, Head Coach Peterson, Assistant Coach Kat Scanlan, Ms. Letty Santarelli and the entire Saints John Neumann and Maria Goretti High School should take great pride in this achievement. Their accomplishments are celebrated by the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I wish the team and the community every success in their future endeavors.●

JOB CORPS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

• Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to recognize the Job Corps program, which trains our Nation's young people to see and create a viable

future. This year, they celebrate their 50th anniversary. In my State, Alaska, our Job Corps Center is now 20 years old. In that time, it has graduated over 5,000 students. At any of Alaska's hospitals, businesses, government offices, native corporations, contractors, electrical or telecom companies, nursing facilities, accounting firms, banks, water plants, and prestigious restaurants, you will always find successfully employed Alaska Job Corps graduates. These former students are now taxpayers and so proud of their achievements. I stand with them, as their proud Senator. These alumni look favorably upon their time at Alaska's Job Corps Center as a time that made an enormous difference in their lives; oftentimes the difference between safety and danger, success and failure, and wealth and poverty. This program works. It has a heart that never stops beating the supportive drumbeat of success and training for our young people.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:22 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S.535. An act to promote energy efficiency.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 471. An act to improve enforcement efforts related to prescription drug diversion and abuse, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 21. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby.

H. Con. Res. 25. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the National Peace Officers Memorial Service and the National Honor Guard and Pipe Band Exhibition.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 471. An act to improve enforcement efforts related to prescription drug diversion and abuse, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following bill was discharged from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, and referred as indicated:

S. 782. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a bison management plan for Grand Canyon National Park; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The following bill was discharged from the Committee on Homeland Se-

curity and Governmental Affairs, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 710. An act to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to prepare a comprehensive security assessment of the transportation security card program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 1035. A bill to extend authority relating to roving surveillance, access to business records, and individual terrorists as agents of foreign powers under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 and for other purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HELLER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ENZI, Mr. LEE, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 1036. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to provide certain Western States assistance in the development of statewide conservation and management plans for the protection and recovery of sage-grouse species, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. RISCH:

S. 1037. A bill to expand the provisions for termination of mandatory purchase requirements under the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. RISCH:

S. 1038. A bill to clarify that no express or implied warranty is provided by reason of a disclosure relating to voluntary participation in the Energy Star program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. RISCH:

S. 1039. A bill to require certain agencies to conduct assessments of data centers and develop data center consolidation and optimization plans to achieve energy cost savings; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 1040. A bill to direct the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the National Academy of Sciences to study the vehicle handling requirements proposed by the Commission for recreational off-highway vehicles and to prohibit the adoption of any such requirements until the completion of the study, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 1041. A bill to eliminate certain subsidies for fossil-fuel production; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. REED):

S. 1042. A bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to permanently prohibit the conduct of offshore drilling on the