

is the principle that not one lawyer—that any one lawyer in the Department of Justice or any agency of government doesn't have a right to override the opinion of the Congress expressed in a statute so clearly as this is expressed.

Madam President, at this time I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 68, S. 579, the Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2015; I further ask consent that the Johnson substitute amendment be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Will the Senator yield for a question?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa has the floor.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. REID. Yes.

Mr. GRASSLEY. May I ask on whose behalf the minority leader is objecting? Is it on his own behalf or on behalf of another Senator?

Mr. REID. Other Senators are concerned about it, and I made the objection on my behalf.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I will not question what the minority leader just said, but it seems to me we ought to know who that Senator is besides the minority leader because Senator WYDEN and I have worked very hard over the last 10 years, and we finally got done what we thought was a very good measure for this body; that the people who put holds on legislation ought to be made public, and there has been nothing in the RECORD. So why don't these people have guts enough to put in the RECORD their reasons and who they are? The public has a right to know that.

Mr. REID. I am it.

Mr. JOHNSON. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. REID. No.

Mr. JOHNSON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Madam President, I want to rise and voice my disappointment. This is a very commonsense piece of legislation that has strong bipartisan support. Senator GRASSLEY has worked tirelessly on this and certainly our committee has as well. We cannot get a simple, commonsense bipartisan piece of legislation passed by the Senate—and then the insult of not even hearing what the objection is.

What is the objection to giving the inspectors general the tools they need to provide the accountability and the transparency to safeguard American taxpayer money?

I cited my example of the Potomac Healthcare system, the Potomac VA health care system, where because an inspector general was not transparent

because the VA inspector general held 140 reports on inspections and investigations, the family of Thomas Baer did not realize there were problems. They took their father to that health care facility and their father died of a stroke because of neglect. That is how important this is. Yet we cannot even hear the reason behind the objection as to why they would not allow this very commonsense piece of legislation to pass.

This is very disappointing.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I have a unanimous consent request.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 6 p.m. today.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, 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 rise today to revisit an issue that some in this body I am sure, no doubt, would probably not want to revisit. My intention is not to cause any of my colleagues discomfort, but this is an issue—and the Presiding Officer knows more than most—that needs to be discussed, and the Presiding Officer has done a great job of discussing it. I think it has become pretty clear to most Americans and many Members of this body that this body made a mistake a few months back, a mistake with significant consequences for our security, for the security of the Middle East, and certainly a mistake as it relates to some of our own American citizens. For the first time in U.S. history on a national security agreement of major importance, the mistake that was made was the Congress of the United States moved forward to approve an agreement not on the basis of a bipartisan majority, which is the history of this country, but on the basis of a partisan minority in both Houses. Of course, I am talking about President

Obama's Iranian nuclear deal that will very soon—as early as next month, according to the terms of the agreement—be sending tens of billions of dollars to the biggest sponsor of terrorism in the world.

There are many things that are going on in this body right now. We are looking at the spending bills, and there is a lot of concern about terrorism. As a matter of fact, polling is showing that right now terrorism is ranking as the highest concern for Americans—higher even than the economy—given the attacks in California and what is happening with ISIS.

Amidst all of these challenges, however, the implementation of the Obama administration's nuclear deal with Iran is looming on the horizon and is not being talked about enough in this body. It is critical that we keep our eye on Iran—still the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism—particularly now. Why is it so critical now? Because, as I noted, as early as next month, in January, tens of billions of dollars of sanctions relief will be pouring into the country of Iran according to the terms of the agreement.

I commend my colleague from New Jersey, Senator MENENDEZ. I was presiding last week in the Senate, and once again he gave another outstanding speech on American foreign policy, on American national security, on what is going on with Iran, what is going on with their activities destabilizing the Middle East, what is going on with their activities which are as we speak violating the Iran U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Yes, I know we debated this issue for a long time on the Senate floor, and I am sure some of my colleagues who voted on this deal are done and they don't want to talk about it anymore.

Mr. President, if you recall, one of the arguments to support this deal, one of the arguments the President was making was that—we were told this deal would change Iran's behavior. President Obama stated that the deal “demonstrates that if Iran complies with its international obligations, then it can fully rejoin the community of nations.” The words of the text of the agreement even state that the United States is “expressing its desire to build a new relationship with Iran.” And, of course, Secretary Kerry, in hearings and in private briefings with the Senate, noted that he thought—and you saw his actions—that the agreement would establish a much more positive and constructive relationship between Iran and the United States. So that was one of the arguments for the deal we voted on. How is that working out? Well, I think we have gotten a new relationship with Iran, all right, but it is worse than the old one.

Since the signing of the Iranian deal, Iran has taken deliberative steps, definitive steps that continue to undermine the security interests of the United States and our allies and those of our citizens in almost every region,

in almost every realm. Every action the Iranians have taken has seemed to want to increase tension between us, Iran, and some of our allies.

I wish to provide some examples. Almost as soon as the ink was dry on this agreement, the Iran regime and its leaders continued doing what they typically do: chanting “Death to America.” And more specifically, the Ayatollah Khamenei predicted that the Zionist regime—of course he is referring to Israel—will be “nothing” in 25 years. It is another one of his references to wiping Israel off the map—after the agreement. Then he stated, of the 25-year period, “Until then, struggling, heroic, and jihadi morale will leave no moment of serenity for the Zionists.” That is the leader of the country we did this deal with—after we signed the agreement. So it is still certainly provocative in that regard.

How about its funding of Hezbollah, one of its terrorist proxies around the world? It is still full speed ahead. There are estimates of up to \$200 million a year. That continues after the signing.

How about abiding by U.N. Security Council resolutions, such as the one that prevents the Quds Force commander, General Soleimani, from traveling? Well, we know that was violated. As a matter of fact, Soleimani went to Moscow to meet with Putin to discuss arms transfers, likely in violation of the U.N. Security Council resolution—the resolution that bans conventional weapons from being imported to Iran. So that was another violation, and they are likely planning another one.

Let me remind this body about the Quds Force commander. This is what former U.S. Army Chief of Staff GEN Ray Odierno said about him:

Qassem Soleimani is the one who has been exporting malign activities throughout the Middle East for some time now. He's absolutely responsible for killing many Americans. In fact, I would say the last two years I was there the majority of our casualties came from his surrogates, not Sunni or al Qaeda.

This is the person who is negotiating with Putin to trade arms—likely in violation of another U.N. Security Council resolution.

What about his troops? Well, we have seen an increase of Iranian troops in Syria. General Dunford, the current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, predicted that there are about 2,000 troops in Syria helping to lead the fight to save Assad and working with the Russians to do that.

How about Iran's compliance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929, which bans its ballistic missile program? Remember that issue? We debated that issue on the floor. General Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, said that under no circumstances should we agree to lifting that ban, but we did in the deal. Now we are learning that Iran has tested not one but two ballistic missiles on October 11 and November 21 in likely—almost certain—violation of U.N. Secu-

rity Council Resolution 1929. In my view, that is a violation of the Iran agreement.

This is what our Ambassador to the U.N. stated. She said that the missiles Iran tested only months after we passed the agreement are “inherently capable of delivering a nuclear weapon.” So they are testing missiles with that capability. This should concern all Americans. What should really concern all Americans right now is that despite Ambassador Power's statement, it appears the Obama administration is looking to do nothing on this violation of the U.N. Security Council resolution.

This is how my colleague from Tennessee, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, BOB CORKER, put it:

Iran violates U.N. Security Council resolutions because it knows neither this administration nor the U.N. Security Council is likely to take any action. Instead, the administration remains paralyzed and responds to Iran's violations with empty words, with condemnation, and concern.

As I mentioned, last week my colleague from New Jersey, Senator MENENDEZ, gave an outstanding speech on this issue on December 8, and he noted—similar to Senator CORKER—that the Obama administration's reaction has been muted, almost one of silence.

Mr. President, there is more. A report from the International Atomic Energy Agency, which we were all anticipating, just recently came out and stated that Iran pursued nuclear weapons in secret until 2009—longer than previously believed. So the country we are doing this deal with, at least according to the IAEA, has been lying to the world.

Iran has been caught lying and cheating. It is testing ballistic missiles against the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929 and others; it is still funding global terrorism; it is sending thousands of troops to Syria to prop up Assad; it has sent the man with the blood of thousands of American soldiers on his hands to Russia to talk about arms trading, in likely further violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions; and, of course, it is still chanting “Death to America” and talking about wiping Israel off the face of the Earth—all since the Obama administration signed the Iranian nuclear agreement.

There is one more outrage, perhaps the worst one, in my view. In a direct affront to the United States and our citizens, Iran is still holding five Americans against their will in that country. Think about that. Many of us who closely watched the negotiations thought surely, surely Secretary Kerry—who had enormous leverage; the entire world was aligned against Iran—would surely use that leverage to get our citizens free, or maybe if he wasn't going to do it as part of the deal, there would be some kind of side agreement after the signing that they

would be quietly released. But, like everything else since the signing of this agreement, the American hostage situation in Iran has actually gotten worse.

I wish to read the names and describe a little bit about the Americans who are currently being held in Iran.

Amir Hekmati of Michigan, a U.S. marine, was detained in Iran in 2011 while visiting Iranian relatives and was sentenced to 10 years in prison for espionage—a U.S. marine who proudly served his country. I am a marine. We don't leave our fellow marines on the battlefield, but evidently the Obama administration has not learned that lesson.

Saeed Abedini of Idaho, a Christian pastor, was detained in Iran in 2012 and sentenced to 8 years in prison on charges related to his religious beliefs. Again, an American is languishing in Iranian jail right now, a pastor.

Robert Levinson of Florida, a former official of the FBI, disappeared in 2007. Iran's leaders denied knowledge of Levinson's whereabouts or any involvement in his disappearance.

Most recently, Siamak Namazi, a Dubai-based businessman, was arrested after the signing of this Iranian nuclear deal—after the signing—was arrested by the Iranian Government while visiting relatives in Iran. Right now, any charges against him are unknown. That happened on October 15.

Of course, Jason Rezaian of California—a journalist for the Washington Post, who was credentialed as a journalist by the Government of Iran—has been detained for over 500 days and recently—again, after the signing of the agreement with President Obama—was sentenced to an undisclosed prison for an undisclosed term for espionage.

That is five Americans right now. I don't have to remind my colleagues that it is the holiday season. It is a time for families and loved ones to come together, to be with each other. But what about the families of these Americans? Who is thinking about them?

Secretary Kerry and President Obama should be on the phone every day working for their release, but that is clearly not happening. As the Washington Post editorial board put it recently:

Iran appears content to allow Mr. Rezaian and the other Americans to rot in prison indefinitely, even as the regime collects more than \$100 billion in sanctions relief and is granted the role it has long sought as a regional power. That should not be an acceptable outcome.

That is the Washington Post. That is the Washington Post editorial—“That should not be an acceptable outcome.” No, it shouldn't. It should not.

All of this begs some very obvious questions. Given Iran's consistent provocative actions against U.S. interests and our citizens since the signing of the Iran deal and given that one of the promises of the deal—better relations with Iran, more constructive behavior from Iran—has proven to be utterly

false, why in the world are we moving full steam ahead with the lifting of sanctions as early as next month? Think about that. Why indeed are we getting ready to release tens of billions of dollars to the world's biggest sponsor of state terrorism when we know the additional money will only embolden Iran? Just think how they are acting now. When they have tens of billions of dollars to further their terrorist activities, it will embolden them to act in even more nefarious ways against our interests and those of our allies and, most importantly, those of American citizens.

Another question: Why aren't the President and Secretary Kerry at a minimum telling the Iranians they won't see one dime—one dime—of the billions and billions of dollars we are set to hand over to the Iranians until all five Americans are released from prison? Why aren't we using that leverage? That leverage is going to go away as soon as we release that money.

Why are we getting ready to release tens of billions of dollars to Iran when it is clear they are going to simply violate this agreement? That is not just my view. Former Senator and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was quoted as saying just last week that it is not if, but when, Iran will violate President Obama's nuclear agreement.

Just last week she stated: "They are going to violate it." Former Senator, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton knows a little about the issue. She helped negotiate it. "They are going to violate it," she said. "They are going to violate it, they are going to be provocative about it, and we need to respond quickly and very harshly." That is the former Secretary of State.

Well, I agree with the former Secretary of State—the Iranians are going to violate this agreement. In fact, it is very likely the Iranians have already violated this agreement with their U.N. Security Council resolution violations.

So what should we do?

First, for any Americans listening, watching, who care about this issue, I urge you to call the President, call the Secretary of State, call the White House, call the State Department. Tell them something that I believe the vast, vast majority of Americans agree with: Our government should not be relieving Iran of any sanctions while it continues to illegally hold five Americans hostage. We should demand of our President that he should not allow tens of billions of dollars to flood into the biggest terrorist regime in the world while our citizens languish in Iranian jails. This is simple, and it is just wrong.

We need to light up the switchboard. Let President Obama know. Here is the number to the White House switchboard: (202) 456-1414. Call the President and tell him you think it is fundamentally wrong to let five Americans languish in prison while we are getting ready to send the biggest terrorist regime in the world tens of billions of dollars.

Call John Kerry. Here is the number to the State Department switchboard: (202) 647-4000. Tell him: Mr. Secretary, get on the phone. Release these prisoners; release our citizens or don't give Iran any of the billions of dollars they think they are going to get next month.

Second, I agreed with my colleague Senator MENENDEZ when he gave his speech last week that we need to keep the leverage against Iran by tightening the full range of sanctions available to us to penalize Iran for violating U.N. Security Council resolutions, as they have done within the last month. In his speech he also said we need to reauthorize the Iran Sanctions Act. I agree with him, and this body should take action to do just that.

Finally, I am working to get support for a simple bill that would prevent the President from lifting sanctions until Iran is no longer designated a state sponsor of terrorism and until Iran releases our five citizens who are languishing in their jails.

With all due respect to my colleagues who voted for this agreement, I believe this body made an enormous mistake by allowing the President's nuclear agreement to move forward. Iran's actions since the signing of this agreement—day after day, against the interests of the United States and our citizens—have made this 100 percent clear.

This mistake can be undone. We don't have to allow Iran access to tens of billions of dollars in sanctions relief while they continue to destabilize the Middle East, while they continue their robust expansive terrorist activities throughout the world. And we certainly—and this is a message for the President of the United States and the Secretary of State. We certainly don't have to allow them the tens of billions of dollars while Iran retains and detains Americans on trumped-up charges in Iranian jails, with no prospect for release. As the Washington Post put it, "That should not be an acceptable outcome."

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. INHOFE. 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 (Mr. HOEVEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

PILOT'S BILL OF RIGHTS 2

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 319, S. 571.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 571) to amend the Pilot's Bill of Rights to facilitate appeals and to apply to

other certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, to require the revision of the third class medical certification regulations issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding to the measure?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I have worked hard, and I—

Mr. INHOFE. Will the Senator yield for one question?

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Certainly, I will yield.

Mr. INHOFE. This is the request to move to the calendar number, and the next request would be for the consideration.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Then I will be happy to yield at this point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding to the measure?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as "Pilot's Bill of Rights 2".

SEC. 2. MEDICAL CERTIFICATION OF CERTAIN SMALL AIRCRAFT PILOTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall issue or revise regulations to ensure that an individual may operate as pilot in command of a covered aircraft if—

(1) the individual possesses a valid driver's license issued by a State, territory, or possession of the United States and complies with all medical requirements or restrictions associated with that license;

(2) the individual holds a medical certificate issued by the Federal Aviation Administration on the date of enactment of this Act, held such a certificate at any point during the 10-year period preceding such date of enactment, or obtains such a certificate after such date of enactment;

(3) the most recent medical certificate issued by the Federal Aviation Administration to the individual—

(A) indicates whether the certificate is first, second, or third class;

(B) may include authorization for special issuance;

(C) may be expired;

(D) cannot have been revoked or suspended; and

(E) cannot have been withdrawn;

(4) the most recent application for airman medical certification submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration by the individual cannot have been completed and denied;

(5) the individual has completed a medical education course described in subsection (c) during the 24 calendar months before acting as pilot in command of a covered aircraft and demonstrates proof of completion of the course;

(6) the individual, when serving as a pilot in command, is under the care and treatment of a physician if the individual has been diagnosed with any medical condition that may impact the ability of the individual to fly;

(7) the individual has received a comprehensive medical examination from a State-licensed physician during the previous 48 months and—