

I regret—I deeply regret—that it was blocked, but I look forward to advancing similar reforms in the future because the idea of making Congress accountable isn't just a good idea; it is burned deeply, indelibly within our constitutional system.

It is no accident that the very first clause of the first section of the first article of the Constitution says, "All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives." All legislative powers—that means all Federal law in this system is vested in a Congress of the United States. We are not supposed to delegate that to someone else.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

GENOCIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, in many places around the world, April is a month where we celebrate rebirth and renewal. But April has too often been, in T. S. Eliot's words, "the cruelest month," a month where some of the world's darkest moments have cast shadows over our humanity.

It was in April 1915 when the Ottoman government began rounding up and murdering leading Armenian politicians, businessmen, and intellectuals, a step that led to the extermination of more than 1 million Armenians.

It was April 1933 that the Nazis issued a decree paving a way for the "final solution," the annihilation of 6 million Jews of Europe.

It was April 1975 that the Khmer Rouge entered Cambodia's capital city, launching a 4-year wave of violence, killing 2 million people.

In April 1992, the siege of Sarajevo began in Bosnia, the longest siege in modern history, where more than 10,000 people perished, including 1,500 children.

It was in April 1994 that the plane carrying the President of Rwanda crashed, triggering the beginning of a genocide that killed more than 800,000 people in 100 days. When we talk about what happened in Rwanda, it is easy to begin to think of genocide as a single, undifferentiated act of barbarism. In reality, it was made of many individual atrocities that took place over 100 days.

In April 2003, innocent civilians in Sudan's Darfur region were attacked, killing more than 400,000 and displacing 2.5 million in a conflict that continues to this day.

This past month, the State Department announced that the United States has determined that ISIS's action against the Yazidis, Shiite Muslims, and Christians in Iraq and Syria constitutes genocide. Specifically, Sec-

retary Kerry noted that in 2014, ISIS trapped Yazidis, killed them, enslaved thousands of Yazidi women and girls, "selling them at auction, raping them at will and destroying the communities for which they lived for countless generations."

I rise here today, in April, not only to commemorate International Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month and pay respect to the innocents who were slaughtered but also to speak about what the United States can and must do to prevent atrocities and genocide.

The commitment to prevent acts of genocide and mass atrocities has been a centerpiece of policy by consecutive administrations of the U.S. Government. The United States was the first country in the world to sign the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, signed in Paris on December 9, 1948, and President Ronald Reagan signed implementing legislation, allowing the United States to become a party to the convention on November 25, 1988.

In the 2006 "National Security Strategy," President George W. Bush highlighted the "moral imperative that states take against to prevent and punish genocide."

I firmly believe that U.S. leadership can make a difference in preventing future genocides and mass atrocities. U.S. leadership can save lives by bringing the power and resources of the United States to bear on atrocity prevention, accountability, and justice.

On April 10, 2014, I introduced the Syrian War Crimes Accountability Act in this Chamber. Three days earlier, the world had marked the 20th anniversary of the genocide of Rwanda, one of the most horrific events in modern history, which unfolded as the world stood back and watched.

At that time, I noted:

Unfortunately, we have not learned the lessons of the past. We must do better to not only see that sort of atrocities never again occur under our watch.

That statement was not only a reflection of my beliefs but a promise to keep the issue of atrocity prevention in front of the Senate and the American people.

So today, under the heavy cloud of atrocities occurring in Syria, South Sudan, and elsewhere, I come to address this body again. I am here today not to look backward about actions not taken. I am here today to stress that our job, our responsibility, is to make sure the United States has the tools—diplomatic, political, economic, and legal—to take effective action before atrocities occur. Essential to this is authorizing the Atrocities Prevention Board and ensuring that the U.S. Government has structures in place and the mechanisms at hand to better prevent and respond to potential atrocities.

President Obama, when he established the Atrocities Prevention Board in 2012, said that "preventing genocide

[is] an 'achievable goal' but one that require[s] a degree of governmental organization that matches the kind of methodical organization that accomplish mass killings."

Earlier this year, I introduced the Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2016 to ensure that we do just that. I am joined in this effort by Senators TILLIS, MURPHY, MENENDEZ, SHAHEEN, BROWN, GILLIBRAND, BLUMENTHAL, COONS, MIKULSKI, MARKEY, MERKLEY, BOXER, CASEY, WARREN, WHITEHOUSE, MURKOWSKI, BURR, and BENNET. This bill authorizes the Board, which is a transparent, accountable, high-level, interagency board that includes representatives at the assistant secretary level or higher from departments and agencies across U.S. Government.

The board will meet monthly to oversee the development and implementation of atrocity prevention and response policy, and, additionally, address over the horizon potential atrocities through the use of a wide variety of tools so that we can take effective action to prevent atrocities from occurring.

This bill gives our Foreign Service officers the training they need to recognize patterns of escalation and early warning signs of potential atrocities and conflict. With this training, we will, over time, build atrocity prevention into the core skill set of our people on the ground. They will be equipped to see the warning signs, analyze the events, and engage early.

The bill also codifies the Complex Crises Fund, which has been a critical tool in our ability to quickly respond to an emerging crises overseas, including potential mass atrocities and conflict. We used the Complex Crises Fund in Tunisia during the Arab Spring and in Sri Lanka after its civil war. We have used it to respond quickly in Kenya and in other countries, where we helped save lives. Importantly, this bill builds greater transparency and accountability into the structure of the Atrocities Prevention Board. Civil society will have a say, and Congress will have a greater oversight role to make sure we are getting this done right.

This is a good bill. It does good things and places the United States on a solid moral ground. But the moral argument alone is not enough. We must also remember that America's security and that of our allies is affected when civilians are slaughtered. Our security is impacted when desperate refugees stream across borders. Our security is affected when perpetrators of extraordinary violence wreak havoc on regional stability, destroying communities, families, and livelihoods.

We have seen groups such as ISIS systematically targeting communities on the basis of their ethnicity or religious beliefs and practices. After 60 years, we still do not have a comprehensive framework to prevent and respond to mass atrocities in genocide.

Let this bill act as a framework and also as our call to action so that when

we use the phrase “never again,” we know that we are taking meaningful action to make that a reality.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for an additional 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Hearing none, it is so ordered.

ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF FREDDIE GRAY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, the death of Freddie Gray was a national tragedy deserving of a national conversation. A year after the death of Freddie Gray, the glare of television cameras covering the ensuing unrest has faded in Baltimore but the hurt and the continuing effort to heal remain.

In the 12 months since Freddie Gray's death, Americans have had long overdue conversations about racially biased policing, poverty in cities across America, the lack of access to quality education, and the scarcity of safe and affordable housing. These conversations have been translated into meaningful actions by Baltimore City residents, community leaders, and lawmakers at every level. Faith groups, community organizations, the business community, and many other groups who love and understand the limitless potential of our city have stood up and articulated their vision on how to build a stronger Baltimore.

The death of Freddie Gray was yet another painful reminder of the problems we have in our criminal justice system. I am a strong supporter of the independence of our judicial branch of government and the grand jury system, but I think all of us understand the frustration when there were no criminal indictments brought in the Trayvon Martin case, the Michael Brown case, the Eric Garner case, and far too many examples across America.

I have been working for years to address problems in our criminal justice system. In the days following the death of Freddie Gray and the ensuing unrest, I called on the Justice Department to open Federal criminal and civil rights investigations into Freddie Gray's death. On April 21, 2015, I was joined by Representative JOHN CONYERS in reintroducing legislation, the End Racial Profiling Act, which I originally introduced before the tragic death of Trayvon Martin.

As Baltimore emerged from the unrest, I met with community leaders to discuss legislative responses to help heal Baltimore's physical wounds and how to address many of the core problems that underpinned the unrest.

I met with a pharmacy owner whose store had been looted. I visited a senior center that was damaged. I spoke with residents in east and west Baltimore. I visited Freddie Gray's elementary school to hear from teachers and community leaders about what tools they required for the Federal Government to better meet the needs of students.

In the weeks following the unrest, I went back and forth from Baltimore City to the Senate and the White House, relaying the needs of Baltimoreans to my colleagues and to top Obama administration officials. I was joined by the Maryland congressional delegation, my colleague and friend Senator MIKULSKI—one of the great leaders on this issue—and members of our city delegation—Congressman CUMMINGS, Congressman RUPPERSBERGER, and Congressman SARBANES.

Congress and the Federal Government responded and continues to respond. I welcomed the announcement that the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division will open a Federal “pattern or practice” investigation of the Baltimore Police Department. This was just one way to help restore the eroded trust between communities and police. To further this effort, I introduced the BALTIMORE Act. The BALTIMORE Act is comprised of four titles.

Title I deals with law enforcement reform. The BALTIMORE Act places bans on racial profiling by State and local law enforcement, mandatory data collection and reporting, and available grants.

It requires local law enforcement officials receiving funds from the Byrne/JAG and COPS Hiring Programs to submit officer training information to the Department of Justice, including how their officers are trained in the use of force, countering racial and ethnic bias, deescalating conflicts, and constructive engagement with the public.

It requires the Department of Justice to report on a plan to assist State and local law enforcement agencies to improve training in the use of force, identifying racial and ethnic bias, and conflict resolution through the course of officers' careers.

The Department of Justice shall develop Field Training Program policies and examine ways to partner with national law enforcement organizations to promote consistent standards for high quality training and assessment. The Department shall also provide a report that contains best practices, model policies, and training toolkits. The Department of Justice will derive action plans for helping law enforcement agencies upgrade their IT systems to submit arrest and officer-involved shooting data.

Lastly, Title I establishes a pilot program to assist local law enforcement in purchasing or leasing body-worn cameras, which requires privacy study.

We have a comprehensive section that deals with law enforcement.

Title II deals with voting rights and civil rights restoration. The BALTIMORE Act restores the right to vote for all citizens after a prison sentence is served, returning citizens the right to vote. It also restores eligibility to sit on Federal juries after a prison sentence has been served.

Title III deals with sentencing law reform, which many colleagues in this

Chamber have been championing. It reclassifies specific low-level, nonviolent drug possession felonies as misdemeanors, eliminating the distinction between crack and powder cocaine for sentencing, and requires fair weight for food products.

Title IV deals with reentry and employment law reform. It is critically important that people have an opportunity once they come out of incarceration. I don't think there is a Member of this Chamber who hasn't had a second chance. This allows nonprofits to apply for Second Chance Act grants.

It authorizes \$200 million annually for the Labor Department's Reentry Employment Opportunities Program. It is a sense of the Congress that the administration should “ban the box” for hiring of Federal contractors.

Baltimore's congressional delegation has been fighting to ensure Federal resources are made available to help the city residents prosper. In the days following the unrest, the Small Business Administration established disaster loan outreach centers in Baltimore to help local owners who have been impacted by the unrest.

The Justice Department has also provided assistance in the form of the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants to help defray the cost of policing during the unrest and to help local law enforcement better safeguard communities from violent crime.

The Department of Education's Project SERV, or School Emergency Response to Violence, has given resources to Baltimore City Public Schools to help students recover from trauma associated with the unrest.

The Environmental Protection Agency pledged funding to help convert vacant lots into gardens that foster a sense of community and increase public and environmental health.

Other Obama administration initiatives such as My Brother's Keeper continue to give communities the tools they need to foster long-term positive change. These are only a small portion of the Federal Government's ongoing commitment to the people of Baltimore City.

I am proud of the Federal Government stepping up to help Baltimore so that Baltimore can reach its full potential. Baltimore is my home. Following the death of Freddie Gray was one of the most difficult days in the city's history. One year later, Baltimore is transforming with the help of ordinary citizens, the business community, and a slew of nonprofits making a measurable impact. I have always been honored to represent the people of Baltimore. As long as I still have that honor, I will continue to make sure the Federal Government is an active partner in empowering Baltimore City to reach its full potential.

In the year since the death of Freddie Gray, we have made progress in building a more just America by investing in Baltimore. Let us continue to build upon that progress.