

This behavior can't be tolerated, and the administration now has the tools to punish these actions. It is unacceptable that it has not done so already, despite the will of this body. Passage of our legislation 96 to 0—every Republican and Democrat supported our efforts to impose sanctions on this regime. These latest developments in North Korea show that we are now reaping the rewards for our weak policies. The simple fact is that this administration's strategic patience has been a strategic failure, both with North Korea and with China, and has resulted in no strategy.

As Secretary Ash Carter stated immediately following the latest nuclear test, China shares an important responsibility for this development and has an important responsibility to reverse it. It is important that it use its location, its history, and its influence to further the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and not the direction that things have been going. We must now send a strong message to Beijing that our patience has run out and exert any and all effort with Beijing to use its critical leverage to stop the madman in Pyongyang. We must not tolerate this behavior.

The four things that I pointed out at the beginning of this talk are important to secure. Tomorrow I will be sending a letter to the President. Over a dozen Members of this body have signed and agreed to participate in this letter, asking a series of questions about our strategy toward North Korea, about the compliance of China and whether they are living up to the full faith of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2270.

Are they skirting the resolution? We are encouraging the closure of the livelihood exemption in the Security Council resolution. It talks about Air Koryo and its ability to skirt the sanctions to help secure luxury goods that are banned by the sanctions.

I hope that other colleagues will stand with me as we make sure that we are doing everything we can to stop the actions of a regime that is bent on the destruction of its neighbor South Korea—our great ally. It is bent on the destruction of our allies around the region and certainly intent on finding the capability, the technology to deliver one of those warheads to the U.S. homeland.

This is an important issue for this generation. It is important that this generation act and solve it before the next generation bears the consequences.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

#### ADDRESSING CRITICAL MATTERS FACING OUR NATION

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I join many of my colleagues who have come to the floor to implore the leadership and my colleagues on the other

side of the aisle to work with us to address critical matters facing our Nation. From failing to provide the necessary funding to combat the Zika virus and our Nation's opioid epidemic to failing to even consider a candidate for the Highest Court in the land, or legislation to curb gun violence and address college costs and the student debt crisis—we must act on all of these measures, and we must do it promptly.

We are entrusted by the American people to find solutions for difficult, hard-to-fix problems, not to ignore them at almost every turn. I have heard from people of all persuasions, reaching out, urging Congress to take action. So I come here today to remind my colleagues across the aisle, and my colleagues within my caucus, that we all must do our job. That message has come through loud and clear from the American public, and we have to put those words into action.

For more than 8 months, we have seen, for example, the harmful effects of the Zika virus. We have seen its heartbreaking impact on newborns, women, and families and deepened our understanding of the suffering this virus causes. Pregnancies have been lost. We have seen children born with permanent birth defects that could have been avoided. And recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said that the disease can enter people's eyes, causing serious vision impairment.

It has been over 6 months since the President requested \$1.9 billion in emergency funding to fight the Zika virus. It has been 4 months since the Senate passed a compromise measure to provide \$1.1 billion for a comprehensive response to Zika and to speed up development of a vaccine by a strong bipartisan vote of 68 to 29.

Instead of the other body passing this measure, the majority in both bodies agreed upon a bill that uses this public health crisis as an opportunity to attack the Environmental Protection Agency and make cuts to the Affordable Care Act, veterans' health care, and other provisions. This approach seeks to drain funds from critical health needs, which have not abated, as a way to pay for the Zika emergency. Indeed, it is an emergency that requires an emergency response.

In light of this failure, the administration shifted all the funds it could to the Zika efforts. As the head of the Centers for Disease Control has noted, these funds are now running out. It is urgent that we pass a measure like the one we already did that gives the public health community the resources it needs to prevent further infections, treat those who have been affected, and develop vaccines to limit future outbreaks.

Unfortunately, Congress has taken a similar approach of delay to the opioid epidemic, severely underfunding efforts to combat this crisis. Like many Americans, I have seen the devastating impact the opioid crisis continues to have

on our Nation. Indeed, since 2010, we have lost more than 1,000 Rhode Islanders to accidental drug overdoses, including more than 230 overdose deaths in 2014—an increase of 73 percent since 2009. Nationally, drug overdoses have exceeded car crashes as the number one injury-related death. Two Americans die of drug overdoses every hour.

Action is urgently called for, and I commend my colleague from Rhode Island, Senator WHITEHOUSE, who spearheaded passage in this body of the bipartisan Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, or CARA. However, CARA provides authority only for a response plan to address this complex challenge; it does not adequately fund this effort. For this law to work, we need real dollars to deliver lifesaving prevention and treatment services. It is critical that we provide robust resources to confront this epidemic and ensure that people have access to the treatment they need. Unfortunately, that has not happened. We cannot fight the opioid crisis with words. We need dollars, as well as words.

Those across the aisle have also fallen short on their responsibility by refusing to hold so much as a hearing on President Obama's nomination of Chief Judge Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court. This body has a constitutional obligation to advise and consent on the President's nominees. When we fail in that obligation, we undermine the stability of our system of justice and endanger Separation of Powers.

Since the stunning announcement by the majority leadership that no hearing would be held on a replacement, the Supreme Court has deadlocked on five major questions of law. These are legal issues that directly impact millions of Americans in terms of labor force protections, business interests, and civil rights. These issues are more important than political gamesmanship, and they need resolution now.

If this obstructionism continues, American families and businesses will face growing legal uncertainty as disputed Federal laws apply differently across States. This damage to our legal system is unprecedented and could take years to undo. I urge my colleagues to do their job and allow a vote on Chief Judge Garland's nomination.

The majority has also thwarted efforts to address the continuing epidemic of gun violence in our country. This year, nearly as many Americans will lose their lives to guns as will be killed in automobile accidents. Sadly, the number of gun deaths continues to grow, fueled by easy access to lethal firearms.

This body could take action to limit the devastation to families in our communities brought about by military-grade firearms that are too easily accessed. It is my hope that through an honest, open dialogue, we can bridge the divide and pass legislation—such as closing the terror gap—in order to keep our families and communities safe from the threat of gun violence.

Another area that I want to emphasize is college affordability, where inaction has exacerbated a crisis in which sending a child to college can often put families hopelessly in the red.

We all understand that education is the engine that pulls this economy forward, fulfills individual aspirations, and makes America what it is. The United States invented modern public education and led the world in access to higher education for generations. It is a great irony that we are falling behind.

Rising college costs and student loan debt are putting America at risk. And too many institutions lack accountability, putting profit before providing a quality education to students. We need to revamp our system for financing college, and we need to help families currently struggling under the weight of student loan debt.

Many of my colleagues, and I have joined them, have put forth common-sense proposals to allow families to refinance student loans at today's low rates; to ensure that all Americans have access to tuition-free community college; to strengthen the Pell grant and reduce the reliance on student loans; and to ensure that States and institutions live up to their shared responsibilities in providing high quality and affordable higher education. These solutions are badly needed, and the majority needs to work with us to do our job and not leave students and families behind.

It is a great honor to serve the people of Rhode Island, and I know all of my colleagues in the Senate feel the same way about their respective States. Congress has always faced an array of complex and varied challenges. We must come together and find sincere solutions to improve our country.

I say to my colleagues: It is long past time to get to work, to do your job, and to act on these pressing problems. They cannot wait any longer.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

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

#### GLOBAL ANTI-POACHING ACT

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 459, H.R. 2494.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2494) to support global anti-poaching efforts, strengthen the capacity of partner countries to counter wildlife trafficking, designate major wildlife trafficking countries, and for other purposes.

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) *SHORT TITLE*.—This Act may be cited as the “Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt Wildlife Trafficking Act of 2016”.

(b) *TABLE OF CONTENTS*.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Definitions.

#### TITLE I—PURPOSES AND POLICY

Sec. 101. Purposes.

Sec. 102. Statement of United States policy.

#### TITLE II—REPORT ON MAJOR WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING COUNTRIES

Sec. 201. Report.

#### TITLE III—FRAMEWORK FOR INTERAGENCY RESPONSE

Sec. 301. Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking.

#### TITLE IV—PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS THE ESCALATING WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING CRISIS

Sec. 401. Anti-poaching programs.

Sec. 402. Anti-trafficking programs.

Sec. 403. Engagement of United States diplomatic missions.

Sec. 404. Community conservation.

#### TITLE V—TRANSITION OF OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY FUNDING TO BASE FUNDING

Sec. 501. Sense of congress on funding.

#### TITLE VI—OTHER ACTIONS RELATING TO WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING PROGRAMS

Sec. 601. Amendments to Fisherman's Protective Act of 1967.

#### SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) *APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES*.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(2) *CO-CHAIRS OF THE TASK FORCE*.—The term “Co-Chairs of the Task Force” means the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Attorney General, as established pursuant to Executive Order 13648.

(3) *COMMUNITY CONSERVATION*.—The term “community conservation” means an approach to conservation that recognizes the rights of local people to sustainably manage, or benefit directly and indirectly from wildlife and other natural resources and includes—

(A) devolving management and governance to local communities to create positive conditions for sustainable resource use; and

(B) building the capacity of communities for conservation and natural resource management.

(4) *COUNTRY OF CONCERN*.—The term “country of concern” refers to a foreign country specially designated by the Secretary of State pursuant to subsection (b) of section 201 as a major source of wildlife trafficking products or their derivatives, a major transit point of wildlife trafficking products or their derivatives, or a major consumer of wildlife trafficking products, in which the government has actively engaged in or knowingly profited from the trafficking of endangered or threatened species.

(5) *FOCUS COUNTRY*.—The term “focus country” refers to a foreign country determined by the Secretary of State to be a major source of wildlife trafficking products or their derivatives, a major transit point of wildlife trafficking

products or their derivatives, or a major consumer of wildlife trafficking products.

(6) *DEFENSE ARTICLE; DEFENSE SERVICE; SIGNIFICANT MILITARY EQUIPMENT; TRAINING*.—The terms “defense article”, “defense service”, “significant military equipment”, and “training” have the meanings given such terms in section 47 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2794).

(7) *IMPLEMENTATION PLAN*.—The term “Implementation Plan” means the Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking released on February 11, 2015, a modification of that plan, or a successor plan.

(8) *NATIONAL STRATEGY*.—The term “National Strategy” means the National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking published on February 11, 2014, a modification of that strategy, or a successor strategy.

(9) *NATIONAL WILDLIFE SERVICES*.—The term “national wildlife services” refers to the ministries and government bodies designated to manage matters pertaining to wildlife management, including poaching or trafficking, in a focus country.

(10) *SECURITY FORCE*.—The term “security force” means a military, law enforcement, gendarmerie, park ranger, or any other security force with a responsibility for protecting wildlife and natural habitats.

(11) *TASK FORCE*.—The term “Task Force” means the Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking, as established by Executive Order 13648 (78 Fed. Reg. 40621) and modified by section 201.

(12) *WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING*.—The term “wildlife trafficking” refers to the poaching or other illegal taking of protected or managed species and the illegal trade in wildlife and their related parts and products.

#### TITLE I—PURPOSES AND POLICY

##### SEC. 101. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to support a collaborative, interagency approach to address wildlife trafficking;

(2) to protect and conserve the remaining populations of wild elephants, rhinoceroses, and other species threatened by poaching and the illegal wildlife trade;

(3) to disrupt regional and global transnational organized criminal networks and to prevent the illegal wildlife trade from being used as a source of financing for criminal groups that undermine United States and global security interests;

(4) to prevent wildlife poaching and trafficking from being a means to make a living in focus countries;

(5) to support the efforts of, and collaborate with, individuals, communities, local organizations, and foreign governments to combat poaching and wildlife trafficking;

(6) to assist focus countries in implementation of national wildlife anti-trafficking and poaching laws; and

(7) to ensure that United States assistance to prevent and suppress illicit wildlife trafficking is carefully planned and coordinated, and that it is systematically and rationally prioritized on the basis of detailed analysis of the nature and severity of threats to wildlife and the willingness and ability of foreign partners to cooperate effectively toward these ends.

##### SEC. 102. STATEMENT OF UNITED STATES POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to take immediate actions to stop the illegal global trade in wildlife and wildlife products and associated transnational organized crime;

(2) to provide technical and other forms of assistance to help focus countries halt the poaching of elephants, rhinoceroses, and other imperiled species and end the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, including by providing training and assistance in—

(A) wildlife protection and management of wildlife populations;