

modernize its armed forces and enhance its defensive capabilities. The proposed sale will help improve the security of the recipient and assist in maintaining political stability, military balance and economic progress in the region.

The proposed sale will improve the recipient's capability in current and future defensive efforts. The recipient will use the enhanced capability as a deterrent to regional threats and to strengthen homeland defense. The proposed sale will improve operational readiness and enhance the electronic warfare capability onboard the ex-KIDD Class destroyers. The recipient will have no difficulty in absorbing this equipment into its armed forces.

The proposed sale will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The prime contractor will be Raytheon Missiles Systems Company of Tucson, Arizona. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

It is estimated that during implementation of this proposed sale, a number of U.S. Government and contractor representatives will be assigned to the recipient or travel there intermittently during the program.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 16-70

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b) (1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

Annex Item No vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The AN/SLQ-32(V)3 is an electronic warfare system providing shipboard identification and cataloguing of the electronic signature of missiles and aircraft. The system consists of sensors and computers which process electronic signals within parameters established in a threat library. The customer currently has an earlier version of this equipment in inventory.

a. The AN/SLQ-32(V)3 upgrade consists of hardware, technical documentation, and software. The highest classification of the hardware to be exported is SECRET. The highest classification of software to be exported is SECRET.

2. If a technologically advanced adversary were to obtain knowledge of the specific hardware and software elements, the information could be used to develop countermeasures which might reduce weapon system effectiveness or be used in development of a system with similar or advanced capabilities.

3. A determination has been made that the recipient country can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives in the Policy justification.

4. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to the Government of Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) in the United States.

MARKETPLACE CERTAINTY ACT

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am expressing sentiments for myself and on behalf of Senators WYDEN and MURRAY, as a fair reading of the Affordable Care Act, ACA, makes clear, S. 1462, the Marketplace Certainty Act, is not necessary to provide a permanent appropriation for the payment of cost-

sharing reductions under the ACA. The ACA already prescribes that such payments are to be made from such a permanent appropriation pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1324. This is because an essential component of the ACA's system for ensuring the availability of affordable health insurance coverage is its two-part package of subsidies: tax credits and cost-sharing reductions. Whereas the premium tax credits make it more affordable for an individual to purchase health insurance, the cost-sharing reductions make healthcare more affordable by reducing the often daunting costs, such as copayments and deductibles, that even those with health insurance must pay to obtain healthcare, ACA, sections 1401, 1402, 26 U.S.C. 36B, 42 U.S.C. 18071. The ACA directs the Secretary of the Treasury to "establish" a single, integrated "program" to "make advance payment" of both subsidies to insurance companies, who are accordingly mandated to reduce individuals' premium payments to insurers, and their cost-sharing obligations to healthcare providers. To assure insurers and covered individuals that these equally essential funds will both be available, the act provides that requisite payments are to be jointly made from a permanent appropriation, 31 U.S.C. 1324, rather than be subject to the year-to-year whims of the annual appropriations process.

Despite the fact that the current permanent appropriation in section 1324 plainly covers these cost-sharing reduction payments, pending litigation brought by the House Republican leadership—which is currently being held in abeyance in the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals—and the current administration's mixed signals as to whether it will continue to make these payments required by law, could generate instability in individual insurance markets. S. 1462 removes all basis for any further questions about what is already clear from a fair reading of the ACA as a whole: both subsidies are to be funded from the same permanent appropriation. In addition, the amendment includes provisions that will strengthen the existing subsidy provisions, and, in light of developments since the ACA was enacted in 2010, make insurance more affordable for beneficiaries and help stabilize State-level individual insurance markets.

NOMINATION OBJECTION

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I intend to object to proceeding to the nomination of Steven Gill Bradbury, of Virginia, to be General Counsel for the Department of Transportation.

LGBTQ PRIDE MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize LGBTQ Pride Month, a time to openly acknowledge and celebrate the contributions lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning individuals have made to

our Country and the progress they have made over the years toward equality and civil rights.

Pride, equality, freedom—these values are at the core of Pride Month for LGBTQ individuals and families in Maryland and across the United States. Every American deserves the same freedoms, the same opportunities and the same protections under the law to love whom they love.

Respect, dignity, hope—LGBTQ Americans have helped drive the innovation and bold ideas that make America exceptional. They have stood sentry in our military, made scientific advances, created jobs from Main Street to Wall Street, made all of America laugh and cry, and so much more. LGBTQ individuals have enriched our communities and made us a stronger nation.

Fear, apprehension, caution—those of us who defend civil rights every day understand that these are discouraging and uncertain times. It pains me to say the full admission of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning individuals into society has yet to be granted. The open expression of one's sexual orientation and gender identity has been—and oftentimes still is—wrought with discrimination and hardship.

Despite the highs of Windsor and Obergefell, the LGBTQ community feels the pain of the senseless shooting at Pulse nightclub 1 year ago, blatant discrimination in States like North Carolina, and the incomprehensible abandonment of transgender students in schools, and the decades of injustice that reach back far beyond Stonewall. The results of last year's Presidential election brought an unwanted chill to the winds of momentum that had swept through the LGBTQ community. Insensitive language from the current administration adds an ominous cloud over the potential for future progress.

To all of my lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning sisters and brothers, I say this: You are not alone. I support you. I will fight alongside you. We will not allow extremism to take away the inherent rights afforded to each and every one of us. Equality and liberty will prevail over any who would use hate and bigotry to frighten or intimidate others.

I have joined with nearly half of the U.S. Senate as a sponsor of the Equality Act, S. 1006, historic, comprehensive Federal legislation that would ensure full Federal nondiscrimination equality for LGBTQ individuals by adding sexual orientation and gender identity to other protected classes, such as race or religion, in existing Federal laws. Despite major advances in equality for LGBTQ Americans, including nationwide marriage equality, the majority of States still do not have explicit LGBTQ nondiscrimination protection laws. The Equality Act would fill in the gap by explicitly banning discrimination in a host of areas, including employment, housing, public

accommodations, jury service, access to credit, and Federal funding.

When the White House broke more than a decade of tradition by failing to recognize June as LGBTQ Pride Month, I joined my colleagues in picking up the mantle by introducing the first-ever Senate resolution recognizing June as LGBTQ Pride Month. The resolution notes major milestones in the fight for equal treatment of LGBTQ Americans and resolves to continue efforts to achieve full equality for LGBTQ individuals.

As we build a new future of equality for all, despite the current headwinds, it is important that we learn from our Nation's past and use it as a source of strength and a teachable moment for those unaware of the history the LGBTQ community and what our Nation has been through. It is my firm hope that we are not seeing a redux of a McCarthy-like rise in political-driven discrimination.

For this reason, I was taken back a bit at the confirmation hearings of Rex Tillerson and Nikki Haley, who are now serving as America's top diplomats, that neither of them would say the phrase "LGBTQ." Following that peculiarity, it has been widely reported that the Trump administration has scrubbed LGBTQ content from various Federal Government websites—in some cases changing the agency's official nondiscrimination policy.

Juxtaposed with the Obama administration that lit up the White House in rainbow lights during Pride month and backed up those concrete actions of support, this attempt to erase LGBTQ individuals from government was disturbing. I was alarmed because I knew that it had been tried before during the McCarthy era. It had a damaging effect on U.S. foreign policy back then, and it cannot be repeated.

In what came to be known as the Lavender Scare, according to the State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security, employees were forced out on the ostensible grounds that their real or perceived sexual orientation rendered them vulnerable to blackmail, prone to getting caught in "honey traps," and a general security risk. Many more individuals were prevented from joining the State Department due to a screening process that was put in place to prevent those who "seemed like they might be gay or lesbian" from being hired.

David Johnson's "The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government," University of Chicago Press, 2006, the definitive academic study of the issue, found that at least 1,000 people were dismissed from the U.S. Department of State alone for alleged homosexuality during the 1950s and well into the 1960s before the "scare" ran its course.

The Senate bears a special measure of responsibility for the Lavender Scare, as the State Department's actions were in part in response to con-

gressional investigations into "sex perversion of federal employees," reports on the employments of "moral perverts by Government Agencies," and hearings or pressure placed on the Department through the appropriations process.

Last year, in my role as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, I urged then-Secretary of State John Kerry to shine a spotlight on this dark period in American diplomatic history by issuing the first-ever public apology for the Department of State's targeting due to perceived sexual orientation.

This month, I introduced new legislation called the Lavender Offense Victim Exoneration Act of 2017, or the LOVE Act. Similar to what was enacted for the men and women of our military, who also were forced to hide their real self to the world, the LOVE Act would make amends and help right the wrongs that were leveled against our U.S. diplomats during this un-American and unacceptable episode in our history. The Lavender Scare is a painful but little-known chapter in American history, and even though times have thankfully changed in so many ways for the LGBT community, we must have the courage of our conviction to recognize wrong, apologize, and move forward with common sense and compassion whenever it is required.

A few have asked me, Why now? Why do we need to relive past transgressions when there are "more important things to do"? The answer is clear: The current administration may work to avoid using the words lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, but Congress should take firm action to show LGBTQ Americans that their valuable contributions to our country—today or 60-plus years ago—are very real and they are recognized. We cannot and should not turn our backs on the individuals who sacrificed so much for the benefit of the American people. We cannot and will not turn back the clock on the hard-fought civil rights of the LGBTQ community.

The theme of the 2017 Baltimore Pride celebration is "Pride Unleashed," a commitment to "work boldly and to live freely." I can think of no better mantra for LGBTQ Marylanders and allies as we fight side by side to protect civil rights and celebrate the strength of our diversity.

I implore you and all of our colleagues to join the fight for LGBTQ equality. The administration also should take firm action to show LGBTQ Americans that their valuable contributions to our country are recognized and appreciated. It is the responsibility of each and every citizen to root out systemic intolerance. Inclusion and diversity are some of our Nation's greatest strengths; yet these values are now in peril. We cannot and will not turn back the clock on hard-fought civil rights for the LGBTQ community.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BALLARD LOCKS IN WASHINGTON STATE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today, with my colleague Senator CANTWELL, I wish to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the construction and operation of the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks, more commonly known in Washington State as the Ballard Locks. The Ballard Locks are not just symbolic of our region's rich maritime history, but a century later, they remain vital to the economy, public safety, environment, and more in Puget Sound.

As early as the 1850s, settlers in Puget Sound recognized the benefits of connecting the region's freshwater lakes to the saltwater of Puget Sound. Shortly thereafter, the U.S. Navy expressed interest. Ultimately, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Army Corps, initiated planning for the locks in the late 1890s and work began in earnest under Hiram M. Chittenden, the Seattle district engineer for the Army Corps from April 1906 to September 1908. Construction began in 1911 after the locks received approval from Congress, and the Ballard Locks were formally opened for vessel traffic on July 4, 1917.

The Ballard Locks enable commercial and recreational vessels to travel to the docks, shipyards, warehouses, maintenance and repair facilities, and marinas in the region's freshwater lakes while also reducing maintenance costs and prolonging vessel life in the freshwater environment. The importance of the locks is underscored by their annual usage. Each year, the Ballard Locks support 45,000 vessel transits and 14,000 lockage counts, which makes them the busiest lock in the United States in overall vessel traffic. If you only count commercial vessels from fishing fleets to oceangoing freight shippers and more, the Ballard Locks are the 12th busiest in the Nation.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I join my colleague Senator MURRAY in commemorating the Ballard Locks' 100th anniversary. As our constituents in Washington State know, these locks are an integral part of our regional economy. The safe and efficient operation of the Ballard Locks supports \$1.2 billion in total lock-related economic activity, more than 3,000 full-time jobs, and more than 1 million tons of freight. With over 1.3 million visitors a year to see the locks and the fish ladder and visit the Carl S. English Jr. Botanical Gardens, the Ballard Locks are one of the region's top tourist attractions generating another \$40 million in economic activity per year.

The Ballard Locks provide critical public safety and environmental functions, maintaining the water level of Lake Washington and Lake Union and preventing salt water intrusion from Puget Sound into these freshwater lakes. The locks support two floating highway bridges—Interstate-90 and