

HONORING SERGEANT VERDELL SMITH

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, yesterday, Tennesseans were really filled with a bittersweet pride as President Trump awarded posthumously the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor to a heroic Tennessean, Sergeant Verdell Smith.

His watch with the Memphis Police Department ended on June 4, 2016. On that day, an armed gunman stole a car and led Memphis police on a chase into the downtown area. Officer Smith responded to the call and worked quickly to clear the pedestrians from an intersection directly in the path of a speeding car. Then the unthinkable happened. Before the police were able to apprehend him, the gunman crashed through a barrier and fatally struck Officer Smith.

Valor is a word that is defined as “great personal bravery.” Valor, you don’t hear it a lot, but valor is that great personal bravery in the face of danger, and I think there is no better way to describe the actions of Officer Smith.

I honor him on behalf of all Tennesseans for his service in the U.S. Navy, for his 18 years with the Memphis Police Department, and for his final act of heroism.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, as I reflected on Sergeant Smith’s story, I began to think about Memorial Day and the ways we honor the valor of every soldier who has made that ultimate sacrifice. One of the first official Memorial Day observances was in 1868, and it was just over the Potomac River in Arlington National Cemetery. If you have not been there to honor those who have given the ultimate sacrifice, I encourage you to do that.

In 1868, individuals gathered to honor those who had lost their life in the Civil War, and they gathered to decorate the graves of the fallen, both the Union and Confederate soldiers. This set a precedent for what would become a national day of unity. Think about that, a national day of unity, of mourning, and of remembrance. As the years went by, Americans took greater steps to memorialize the fallen and those who have exercised valor and have chosen to make that ultimate sacrifice.

After World War I, observances were expanded to honor those who fell in all American wars. Finally, it was in 1971 that Congress declared Memorial Day to be a national holiday. Since then, each year, at the end of May, cities across the Nation have lowered their flags to half-staff as a silent reminder of the cost of the freedom.

Just like Sergeant Smith, the fallen warriors we honor this Memorial Day made a choice to serve this Nation. They knew it wouldn’t be easy. They

knew it would be dangerous or even deadly, but they knew that it would be worth it because it would be a step in preserving freedom and freedom’s cause. It is this choice—and the choice to serve bravely and selflessly on behalf of a grateful nation—that we remember, as we debated crucial legislation supporting our Armed Forces.

Memorial Day marks the conclusion of Military Appreciation Month, which has provided each of us an opportunity to unite and reflect upon the heroic courage of all the members of our Armed Forces. We thank them continually for the service they provided and the sacrifices that they and their families make on behalf of this Nation and freedom.

Yesterday, members of the Armed Services Committee—of which Madam President and I are each a member of this committee—completed our first steps in ensuring that this year’s National Defense Authorization Act fully funds the resources our military needs to defend against the threats that we face on land, by sea, in air, and of course in the cyber realm. Our proposed \$750 billion national defense budget will more than support this goal and includes a much-needed and well-deserved pay increase for our military men and women.

The NDAA, as it is called in an acronym that we hear around here so regularly, is just one piece of our greater promise to care for soldiers on and off the battlefield. As Members of Congress, we have a duty to keep the promise to those who bravely defend the safety and the security of the American people. Also, we have a responsibility to those whose broken-hearted vigil we join this Memorial Day weekend.

Just as valor lived in the hearts of the fallen, so does their sacrifice endure in the life of every person blessed to call this great country home.

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.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

END MASS DEPORTATION ACT

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, I take to the floor today to urge my colleagues to halt the President’s indiscriminate deportation regime. This administration is targeting immigrants who are deeply woven into our communities, and this inhumane approach must end.

For 30 years, David Chavez-Macias, who was born in Mexico, lived in Reno, NV. He worked as a landscaper during the week and went to church on Sundays. He raised four children, and he tried to follow the law. He paid his

taxes and hired attorneys to help him become an American citizen. In 2013, he was pulled over for turning left as the street light changed. That traffic stop brought him to the attention of immigration enforcement.

Now, the previous administration had permitted Mr. Chavez-Macias to stay with his family. After all, he had a heart condition that required regular treatment, and he had been a hard-working community member for decades; yet under this administration, David was deported to Mexico, ripping him from his family.

Now, as a granddaughter of immigrants, I understand how much immigrants like David contribute to American communities, and as a native Nevadan—a State where one in five schoolchildren have an undocumented parent—I know how deeply communities are hurt when we drive out long-time members. That is why I am introducing the End Mass Deportation Act to keep the Trump administration from pursuing people like David. This bill will make sure we are not indiscriminately targeting people for deportation who have contributed to their communities for decades.

Just days after taking office, President Trump issued an Executive order that changed our immigration enforcement priorities. He gave ICE the green light to aggressively pursue anyone without papers, not just people who had committed serious crimes or posed a threat to our public safety. My bill rescinds this cruel and counterproductive order.

Now, the Trump administration is deporting people who have lived in the United States—sometimes for decades—playing by the rules, providing for their families, starting businesses, and contributing to their communities. In Nevada, almost 90 percent of undocumented residents have been in the United States for more than 5 years.

These are people who own their own homes. They are people who pay billions of dollars in taxes each year. Their children are citizens, legal permanent residents, and Dreamers. They are our neighbors, our coworkers, and our friends. The impact of this policy on American families has been profound. Since President Trump signed his Executive order, arrests of immigrants without criminal records have tripled.

The End Mass Deportation Act would make the administration focus our law enforcement resources where they should be: on people who pose a legitimate threat to our communities.

Historically, prosecutorial discretion was used to take into account the compelling circumstances of an individual’s case, like parents who have U.S. citizen children and strong ties to the community or individuals who have served in our military. As a former prosecutor, I understand what an important law enforcement tool this is.

The President’s mass deportation order ends that prosecutorial discretion in our immigration system, taking

valuable time and resources away from pursuing criminals and other security threats. Even worse, the order makes us all less safe because it discourages people without documentation from turning to police to report crime.

Put yourself in the shoes of an undocumented woman who is the victim of domestic violence or someone without papers exploited at the hands of an unscrupulous boss. When those crimes go unreported, our neighborhoods suffer.

Listen, I recognize that we have a broken immigration system, but the way to fix it isn't to persecute people like David whose biggest offense is a traffic ticket. We need to pass comprehensive immigration reform, but until we do and until we can come together in a bipartisan way, we must rescind these Executive orders that are not moving this debate forward in a useful way. Let's reverse this administration's cruel and dangerous policy.

I am the first to tell you—and I see it every single day in my State—immigrants enlarge our vision of who we live with, work with, and worship with. By passing the End Mass Deportation Act, we will remind all Americans that every generation of immigrants enriches the fabric of our Nation and will provide the sense of security that every family with undocumented members needs to thrive. I urge my colleagues to support this act.

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. WICKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

S. 151

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, in a few moments, the Senate will vote on the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act. The shorthand name for that is the TRACED Act. I rise in strong and optimistic support of this legislation at this time. I thank the leadership on both sides of the aisle for working to bring this bill to a vote.

Last month, the people of my State of Mississippi received over 50 million robocalls. That is just in the State of Mississippi, with about 3 million citizens. That is more than 17 robocalls for every man, woman, or child in my State—50 million. Imagine what it is around the country. It is billions and billions.

Some robocalls are legitimate. When we get a reminder from a doctor's office that our appointment is coming soon or when a school activity is canceled, those are welcome. But many are not. Most are not.

Billions and billions of robocalls are scams targeting the most vulnerable

members of our society. These abusive robocalls have plagued Americans for years. Studies show that in my part of the country, the Southeastern United States, they are particularly abusive and pervasive, costing consumers billions of dollars each year and costing our economy billions of dollars each year.

Many of these illegal robocalls use what is referred to as neighbor spoofing, where robocallers somehow manage to use a local number and a local area code in the hope that recipients will be more likely to pick up the phone. The result is many Americans don't answer those phone calls. They just let it ring and see if there is a message. But Americans also miss important calls because of scammers and because this has been hijacked by the extraordinary networks used by these scammers and illegal violators of the law.

The TRACED Act will help. It goes after abusive and illegal robocallers by giving consumers, regulators, and law enforcement tools to fight the people taking advantage of the system. The bill will help the Federal Communications Commission, or the FCC, to crack down on violators, require phone companies to authenticate calls, and require the FCC to consider when and how to make call-blocking services available to customers.

Perhaps the most important part of the TRACED Act is that law enforcement will now join the battle. Under the authority of the U.S. Attorney General, the bill will get law enforcement fully engaged in the fight to prevent and prosecute robocall violations. The American people are ready for this and are demanding this. We can give it to them in just a few moments when we vote on final passage.

The bill will task the Attorney General with providing Congress with the next steps we need to take to stay ahead of the pestilence of illegal robocalls.

I thank the bipartisan leadership in the Commerce Committee for moving this bill forward and the authors, Senator THUNE and Senator MARKEY, for their leadership on this important issue. I thank my ranking member, the Senator from Washington, Ms. CANTWELL, for her help in getting this important piece of legislation approved by a voice vote out of the Commerce Committee. Also, there is a special thank-you to Senator SCHATZ and Senator MORAN for their amendment to the TRACED Act, which improves the FCC's reporting on robocalls and generally makes the bill better.

I predict an overwhelming majority vote for this piece of legislation when it comes up for a vote in just a few moments. My appreciation goes to all of those who have participated. My optimism is that this will soon move to passage in the House of Representatives also.

Thank you.

I see my distinguished colleague from Massachusetts, the sponsor of this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I rise in support of the TRACED Act, a piece of legislation that will help all Americans deal with the epidemic of robocalls, which afflicts them and their families every single day of the year.

I thank Chairman WICKER for all of his assistance in moving this legislation expeditiously through the legislative process.

I thank my partner, Senator THUNE from South Dakota. He and I have worked very hard to reach this moment where Democrats and Republicans can come together on an issue, which we all agree is something that we have to address in a very serious way.

So this question of robocalls and their role in American society, well, it is a daily deluge of calls that Americans experience. It is more than a nuisance in 2019. It is a consumer protection crisis.

Americans across the country face an epidemic of robocalls bombarding landlines and mobile phones. While our phones were once a reliable means of communication, they have been turned against us and are now mechanisms for scammers and fraudsters who wish to do us harm. The numbers are staggering.

In 2018, consumers received an estimated 48 billion robocalls—18 billion more than in 2017. That is 131 million robocalls per day—more than 5 million calls an hour, more than 1,000 calls per second in the United States, and nearly 500 million robocalls to Massachusetts residents alone.

The reality is that we no longer have confidence in our phones. What was once a trusted means of communication, our phone has become a tool for fraud, scams, harassment, and an avenue by which individuals with bad intent can access our homes, our purses, or our pockets at any time.

Caller ID is not trusted. Important calls go unanswered. Innocent Americans are defrauded. Our seniors, in particular, are targeted. Robocalls are a menace. But today, the U.S. Senate is saying loud and clear that robocall relief is in sight.

I am proud to partner with Senator JOHN THUNE from South Dakota on the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act, or TRACED Act. Our legislation cracks down on scammers that now account for nearly one-half of all of the robocalls in our country. It is an unbelievable number. One-half of all of the robocalls are now being delivered by scammers trying to take advantage of innocent Americans.

Years ago, scammers needed expensive, sophisticated equipment to robocall and robotext consumers en masse. Today, they just need a