

And former Reagan Attorney General Ed Meese wrote for the Hoover Institution over 20 years ago, in 1999, highlighting the following problems with over-criminalization of Federal law. He warned about these:

An unwise allocation of scarce resources needed to meet the genuine issues of crime;

An unhealthy concentration of policing power at the national level;

An adverse impact on the federal judicial system;

Inappropriately disparate results for similarly situated defendants, depending on whether essentially similar conduct is selected for federal or state prosecution;

A diversion of congressional attention from criminal activity that only federal investigation and prosecution can address;

The potential for duplicative prosecutions at the state and federal levels for the same course of conduct, in violation of the spirit of the Constitution's double jeopardy protection.

I think the Senate should consider those warnings and should not rush to approve such a measure without hearing testimony and a long and careful study.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2843

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to call attention to key legislation that addresses violence, and this piece of legislation should come to the floor. That is the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act.

VAWA reauthorization expired over a year and a half ago, on February 15, 2019. Funding continues, but key improvements are being delayed by the lack of reauthorization.

The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019 is supported by all 47 Democratic Senators. The House passed the bill 236 to 158. Thirty-three House Republicans voted yes on that bill.

The bill would extend VAWA for 5 years, through 2024, while making key improvements.

As the vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, I know how critical VAWA reauthorization is to Indian Country.

Data from the U.S. Department of Justice indicates that Native women face murder rates that are more than 10 times the national average murder rate. There are more than 5,000 cases of missing American Indian and Alaska Native women, and 55 percent of Native women have experienced domestic violence. More than four in five American Indian and Alaska Native women experience violence in their lifetime.

Without the enactment of a VAWA reauthorization, these Tribes will lack the jurisdictional tools they need to keep their communities safe.

The House-passed bill strengthens Tribal sovereignty, provides important protections for LGBT people, and bars dating partners convicted of domestic violence from having handguns.

The bill would make a real difference in preventing violent crimes against

women and making Native communities safer, and I ask that the Senate take up its consideration immediately.

As if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 2843, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I have to say this sounds a lot like yet another attempt to just change the subject and obfuscate.

I was on this floor earlier this week. The Senator from Alaska has just spoken about his goal here. Both of us have slightly different approaches to try to achieve the same thing, which is to discourage these attacks on law enforcement officials.

It seems like almost every day we read about some horrific attack on men and women across the country just because they are police. It is absolutely appalling, and we are trying to do everything we can to discourage that, to create disincentives, and to make sure that violent criminals know that they will pay a very steep price if they commit the appalling kinds of acts that we have seen.

I commend the Senator from Alaska for an approach to this. Yet, again, our Democratic colleagues refuse to support this effort and instead say: Let's change the subject to VAWA.

Well, let's talk a little bit about VAWA. Look, there is a very real problem with violence against women. I don't know anyone who would dispute that. And VAWA, the legislation, has a number of programs, some of which are very constructive.

I voted in favor of the last reauthorization of VAWA because I do think it is that important, and I have led the effort in this body to ensure that crime victims—very much including women—get the resources they are supposed to get from the Crime Victims Fund, which they historically have not been. But the fact is, it is a big bill, it is a complicated bill, and there are multiple programs, and some of it is very controversial.

So the way we have actually gotten an outcome and achieved something with VAWA is through a bipartisan process. That is what was done in the past, and that effort has been underway. Senator ERNST, working with Senator FEINSTEIN, has tried to find common ground. I think they are not quite there yet. But this legislation is not that bill. It is not that effort.

This is a bill that our Democratic colleagues have declared they know has no chance of actually passing. So

rather than changing the subject and putting forward a bill that everybody knows can't pass, I wish our Democratic colleagues would join me and my colleague from Alaska in doing something we can do, something modest but constructive that would help to diminish the risks that our law enforcement folks take every single day. So, Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from Pennsylvania. I know he and I both share a passion on this issue. I think the vast majority of the Senators share a passion on this issue—that we should be standing here in the U.S. Senate to make sure our law enforcement knows that we have their backs.

As Senator TOOMEY just mentioned, this is happening all across the country. The men and women who put on the uniform to protect us are being targeted simply because they wear the uniform to protect us. If this is not an issue that cries out for some kind of action, some kind of discussion to prevent this and tell these brave men and women, whether in Alaska or Pennsylvania or New Mexico, that we have their backs, I don't know what that topic is—I don't know what that issue is.

Unfortunately, Senator TOOMEY tried to move his legislation the last couple of days, and it was thwarted. Now my legislation to send the message that we are not going to let criminals get away with these kinds of heinous crimes, that the Senate is watching, and that we have the backs of law enforcement and their families—that is a really important message to send right now.

I am disappointed in my colleague for objecting. We will continue to work on this issue and, as Senator TOOMEY mentioned, the violence issue, which is a hugely important issue in my State for my constituents. But right now, I think we should be acting on the issue we are seeing, and that issue is, there is a movement across the country that is really focused on perpetrating violence against the men and women who are sworn to protect us. I can't believe anyone here thinks that is a good movement, but it is happening in America right now. We need to send a message that it is unacceptable and that we are going to do everything in our power to stop it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. ROUND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote scheduled for 1:30 p.m. be allowed to start at this time.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Johnston nomination?

Mr. ROUND. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITTO), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) would have voted “yea.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 77, nays 14, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 183 Ex.]

YEAS—77

Alexander	Feinstein	Portman
Baldwin	Fischer	Reed
Barrasso	Gardner	Risch
Bennet	Graham	Roberts
Blackburn	Grassley	Romney
Blunt	Hassan	Rosen
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Heinrich	Rubio
Brown	Hoeven	Sasse
Cardin	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Carper	Inhofe	Shaheen
Casey	Jones	Shelby
Cassidy	Kaine	Smith
Collins	Kennedy	Stabenow
Coons	King	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Tester
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tillis
Cramer	Loeffler	Toomey
Crapo	Manchin	Udall
Cruz	McConnell	Van Hollen
Daines	McSally	Warner
Duckworth	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murphy	Wicker
Enzi	Paul	Young
Ernst	Peters	

NAYS—14

Blumenthal	Klobuchar	Schatz
Booker	Markey	Schumer
Cantwell	Menendez	Warren
Gillibrand	Merkley	Wyden
Hirono	Murray	

NOT VOTING—9

Burr	Johnson	Sanders
Capito	Moran	Scott (FL)
Harris	Perdue	Sinema

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Arkansas.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a pe-

riod of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

(The remarks of Mr. COTTON pertaining to the introduction of S. 4609 are printed in today's Record under “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

Mr. COTTON. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

ABRAHAM ACCORDS

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, a few days ago, Flight 971 took off from Tel Aviv Airport. You may say: Of course the flight took off from Tel Aviv; that happens every day—but not like this flight. You see, Flight 971 took off from Tel Aviv Airport, flew south, directly over Saudi Arabia, which hasn't happened, and landed in Abu Dhabi because the United Arab Emirates has formed a peace agreement with Israel—recognizing its right to exist, opening up Embassies in Israel and in the United Arab Emirates, beginning trade in commerce. Just days ago, the first cargo aircraft took off and flew, taking supplies, technology, medicine—engagement between the Nation of Israel and the Arab nation of the United Arab Emirates, forming a new alliance in the Middle East.

Flight 971 is significant because 971 is the country code if you are going to call the United Arab Emirates. The return flight, by the way, leaving from Abu Dhabi and flying back to Israel is Flight 972—the country code for Israel.

That first flight that took off, on the outside of the plane were emblazoned three words—one in English, one in Hebrew, and one in Arabic—all translated, the word “peace.”

It is a new day. And this week, when President Trump and the Foreign Ministers from the United Arab Emirates and from Bahrain and the Prime Minister of Israel all stood at the White House and spoke of each other in a new partnership and then all sat at a table and signed documents together, beginning a new relationship not just with UAE but also with Bahrain, it was a remarkable day in world history.

In 70 years of Israel's history, only two nations that are Arab nations have recognized Israel's right to exist, even—Jordan and Egypt. In 1 day, two more nations joined—the UAE and Bahrain. It was significant to be able to see the journey on that and to be able to hear the Foreign Ministers of Bahrain and UAE compliment President Trump, Mike Pompeo, and Jared Kushner for their leadership and, as the Foreign Minister from Bahrain said, President Trump's statesmanship in this process.

It was a negotiation that was turned on its head. For decades, American negotiators have tried to work to solve the issues with the Palestinians first and then to work to solve every other

relationship second. That has been the American focus. The Trump negotiations reversed it. They believed that many in the Arab world were tired of the Palestinians holding their foreign policy hostage, and they flipped it and said: Why don't we start negotiating with the Arab world first and see if they want to open up trade negotiations with Israel and be able to stabilize those negotiations?

It has worked. Not only has it worked in two countries—in a single day signing an agreement—but there are multiple other nations that are currently looking at this same deal with Israel to say: Yes, we still need to resolve the issues in the Palestinian territory. Yes, that is still very important. But these nations can work toward peace and unity together as they resolve their differences.

They signed a document dealing with relationships diplomatically, but they also signed something they called the Abraham Accords Declaration. Let me read this accord to you because it is significant. It begins with this simple statement:

We, the undersigned, recognize the importance of maintaining and strengthening peace in the Middle East and around the world based on mutual understanding and coexistence, as well as respect for human dignity and freedom, including religious freedom.

That is a significant statement. Nations have spoken of religious freedom, but it has not thrived there.

The document goes on to say:

We seek tolerance and respect for every person in order to make this world a place where all can enjoy a life of dignity and hope, no matter their race, faith, or ethnicity.

We support science, art, medicine, and commerce to inspire humankind, maximize human potential and bring nations closer together.

We seek to end radicalization and conflict to provide all children a better future.

We pursue a vision of peace, security, and prosperity in the Middle East and around the world.

It was a document many people said would never be signed, but it is a stake in the ground to say it is a new day in the Middle East in peace negotiations and a pivot, as Prime Minister Netanyahu said.

Nations like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Amman, Morocco, Sudan, and Lebanon should take notice and should see the benefit to economic trade and engagement, to confronting Iranian influence in the area that tries to destabilize so much of the Middle East, pushing back on terrorism, and developing partnerships in science and health and technology and prosperity for everyone in the region. That happened this week.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. LANKFORD. There is something happening on Monday that much of the world has missed as well in the Middle East. For a year, there has been a process ongoing to be able to confront Iran.