

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

ENSURING THAT GOODS MADE WITH FORCED LABOR IN THE XINJIANG UYGHUR AUTONOMOUS REGION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA DO NOT ENTER THE UNITED STATES MARKET

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, we have come down to the floor multiple times in the last few weeks trying to push the passage of our bipartisan Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act.

For those who are not familiar with it at this point, it basically says that you can't import products into the United States that are made by slave labor in Xinjiang or entities that are associated with the government of that region. If you are a company that is manufacturing in that area, you need to prove that slaves didn't make it; the presumption is on you.

It is already illegal, by the way, to bring goods made with slave labor. It has been that way since the thirties. Yet it still happens, and we know it is happening at an alarming, horrific rate, with the genocide that we now witness being carried out by the Chinese Government in the Xinjiang region.

This bill, which we hope, here in a few moments, passes today, will head to the President and will become law, and it will help tremendously in stopping that from happening.

Many companies have already taken steps to clean up their supply chains, and, frankly, they should have no concerns about this law. Yet for those that have not done that, they will no longer be able to continue to make Americans—every one of us, frankly—unwitting accomplices in the atrocities and genocide that are being committed by the Chinese Communist Party.

As if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 6256, which was received from the House; 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Reserving the right to object, first, let me thank the Senator from Florida for doing such great work, along with Senator MERKLEY and others, on this incredibly important piece of legislation. We are going to be able in a few moments to speak together, Republicans and Democrats, on our commitment to ending genocide in China.

I want to thank the Senator for working with me to make sure that, as part of his unanimous consent request, we are going to be able to make sure we have personnel in place to properly implement this policy. We have dozens of State Department and Department

of Defense nominees pending on this floor—more so than we have ever had at the end of a first-term, first-year Presidency—and we will, hopefully before we leave—we have to, before we leave, make substantial progress on this list in order to adequately protect our country.

At the very least, as we put forward this important new policy, it does make sense to accompany it and its passage with three key personnel who will be in charge of implementing it.

I believe we are going to be able to modify this request in the following manner. I would formally ask Senator RUBIO to modify this request that he has made to include the following request.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. MURPHY. I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, if applicable, at 4:30 p.m. today, the Senate proceed to the following nominations: Executive Calendar No. 525, R. Nicholas Burns, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China; Calendar No. 626, Ramin Toloui, of Iowa, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Economic and Business Affairs); and Calendar No. 619, Rashad Hussain, of Virginia, to be Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom; that there be 10 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form on the nominations en bloc; that upon the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that if the nominations are confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modification?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I have no objection to the modification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request, as modified?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 6256) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:52 p.m., recessed until 2 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SCHATZ).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, this is Holly Durben from Shenandoah, IA.

Holly was someone who loved animals and loved nature. She was a people person. The thing that she loved most in the world was her family.

But tragically, Holly took her last breath on the morning of July 18, 2009. Brian Davis murdered her in a small farmhouse just south of Shenandoah. Holly is one of the hundreds of women murdered annually by a current or former intimate partner—nearly three women a day.

Americans are being devastated by a wave of violent crime. Night after night, folks turn on their local news and hear of yet another tragic story of murder, of rape, and violent crimes of all natures that are ravaging their community.

In October, the United States recorded its highest spike in homicides in modern history. Last year the murder rate in this country rose by 30 percent. These murders are not being committed by law-abiding citizens. They are being committed by extremely dangerous and violent criminals, like Brian Davis.

The reality is victims like Holly Durben and violent criminals like Brian Davis have been locked in homes together for nearly 2 years during this pandemic. Violent convicted criminals like Brian Davis, who murdered Holly, his fiancée, should not have access to firearms.

Law-abiding Americans need the ability to protect themselves from violent criminals like Brian Davis. Iowans are common sense. We are pragmatic. We take our Second Amendment rights incredibly seriously. We value the safety of our communities, and we think it is right to punish violent criminals when they break the law and are convicted.

This isn't some crazy idea. Under current Federal law which has been on the books for decades and in State codes all across the country, there are violent crimes that result in consequences like the inability to possess a firearm. For example, someone convicted of a felony forfeits many of their rights. Felons can't be on a jury. They can't work for the Federal Government or serve in the military.

Felons, like murderers and drug kingpins, lose these rights when they commit and are convicted of their crimes. A fugitive from justice is not permitted to have a firearm; the same for those who are in this country illegally.

Under current law—current law—individuals who have been convicted of a misdemeanor domestic-violence crime are also on this list. As of today, if two individuals are married, the convicted abuser is held accountable, and that makes sense. But if they are not married, the convicted violent abuser is not held accountable.

I believe we need to get tough on crime, and I believe law-abiding gun owners in this country agree with me. Brian Davis, a violent, convicted criminal is not law abiding.

I want to be crystal clear about a few things. One, what we are talking about

here depends on a conviction—a conviction of domestic violence. That is a guilty verdict after a just trial, an adjudicated-fairly trial. Due process is completely intact, fully present, and I will not be compromised on that, I can promise you.

Two, domestic violence does not mean emotional distress. Domestic violence does not mean a verbal argument. Domestic violence means a violent crime.

Three, not a single innocent or law-abiding gun owner will or should be impacted. Today there are women trapped in relationships with violent criminals, our daughters and mothers, our friends, and our neighbors.

Convicted violent criminals have proven themselves to be unfit to fully participate in our society. We can't choose to just protect women with a ring on their finger from violent abusers. We must hold violent criminals accountable. Let's protect our daughters and punish the criminals.

Speaking from personal experience, domestic violence is a crime worth being tough on.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VAN HOLLEN). The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to share my support of the ongoing bipartisan efforts to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

As you know from the prior speaker, the distinguished Senator, negotiations to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act on a bipartisan basis have been ongoing now for three years. Since the beginning of this year, my office has been working closely with Senator ERNST's, Senator DURBIN's, and Senator MURKOWSKI's offices to negotiate bipartisan agreement to reauthorize this important and critical law. I am thrilled that we are now able to share that we have reached a bipartisan framework which will strengthen, modernize, and reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

We are committed to introducing this bill next month. This bipartisan agreement would reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act through 2026 and provide important opportunities to modernize the law that has been so critical to protecting and supporting survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Our bipartisan agreement would enhance and expand services for survivors of domestic violence—including survivors in rural communities, LGBT survivors, survivors with disabilities, and survivors who experience abuse later in life.

Our agreement would reauthorize and strengthen the criminal justice response to domestic violence, including by improving the Justice Department's STOP grant program, closing the "dating partner loophole" on a prospective basis, and strengthening the ability of Tribal courts to address instances of domestic violence on Tribal land.

Our agreement would also invest in prevention education efforts. It would expand access to emergency housing support for domestic violence survivors, and it would improve the healthcare response to sexual violence across the country.

These protections are urgently needed, and the time to act is now. I have been here for a while. I have never seen the coming together of the two sides of the aisle any stronger than it is now to work together to solve this problem. So I look forward to participating in the introduction of this bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act next month.

NOMINATION OF HOLLY A. THOMAS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I would, if I could, also like to speak briefly in support of Holly Thomas, who has been nominated to serve as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Judge Thomas is an experienced appellate litigator and currently serves as a judge of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County. And I hope my colleagues will support her.

Mr. President, I rise today in support of the nomination of Holly Thomas to serve as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Judge Thomas is an experienced appellate litigator and sitting State court judge in California. I believe she would make an outstanding addition to the Ninth Circuit.

Her credentials are impeccable. She is a graduate of Stanford University and Yale Law School.

After law school, Judge Thomas spent more than a decade gaining experience and insight into the Federal appeals courts as a litigator whose primary focus was on appellate cases. She has served as a public interest lawyer with the NAACP, in the Federal Government as an appellate attorney with the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department, and in State government in both California and New York.

Though she began her career as an appellate litigator, Judge Thomas has been fascinated by judicial service since her childhood. When she was a young child, her mother—who was a bookkeeper—would take her to the San Diego courthouse to watch the legal proceedings in court.

So it is fitting that in 2018, she was appointed to serve as a judge on the California Superior Court for Los Angeles County. Judge Thomas works in the Family Law Division, where she hears between 10 and 30 cases on average each day, including a mix of hearings and trials. She has also served on a temporary basis as a State appeals judge on the California Court of Appeal for the Second Appellate District.

Judge Thomas has a breadth of experience and knowledge that would make her well-suited to sit on the Ninth Circuit. If confirmed, Judge Thomas would be the first Black woman to serve on the Ninth Circuit from California and only the second Black woman to ever serve on the Ninth Circuit.

I encourage all my colleagues to vote for her confirmation.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

Violence Against Women Act

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I am pleased to be on the floor today with my colleagues, both the Senator from Iowa behind me and the Senator from California, because I want to thank them publicly for their leadership as they work to address these issues of domestic violence. They have been leaders in this arena for years, and I appreciate that.

I am pleased to have worked with them on this framework that has been discussed by both Senators and to acknowledge the work of Senator DURBIN as part of this initiative as well.

I think as both of them have spoken, it is recognized that this is a matter of urgency. This is a matter for all of us, on a bipartisan basis. Domestic violence, unfortunately, knows no political bounds, and our response to those who are truly among the most vulnerable of us—that response—should also be bipartisan.

So I want to commend Senator ERNST, Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator DURBIN for their work in really coming to find common ground on this very important matter. It has been years—

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Permit me a moment to interrupt you.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Please.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. One of my great joys is to work on a bipartisan basis, and the Senator from Alaska has been just wonderful. She is a 10, in my book.

You have listened to us on this side. Our staffs have been able to work closely together, and I think, thanks to you, we have a workable, bipartisan product. So I just want to say thank you. I wish the Senate could be more like this all the time, but I think we made a great notch in the right track. So thank you very much.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Well, thank you.

Again, it takes a lot of people, and the years that Senator ERNST has been working this initiative on this side of the aisle is something that, again, we want to build on, and we need to build on it together.

It has been years in the making. The last time we had a VAWA reauthorization was VAWA 2013, and so we are high past time to be addressing this very significant matter.

No compromise is perfect. I think everyone recognizes that. But what has been developed through this framework is a proposal that will really help to prevent violence, to support our survivors, and to hold perpetrators to account.

The effort to be here where we are today on the floor, speaking to this, is one thing, but we all want to get to that next step, which is filing the legislation so we can get it moving through this process, and I look forward to doing that in the new year.