

zero—incentive for colleges to contain costs. In fact, there is reason to fear that it could actually encourage colleges to raise their prices or, at least, make them significantly less reluctant to do so.

And, of course, the President's proposal does nothing to discourage students from borrowing substantial amounts of money to finance their education. Indeed, there is a good chance students will increase their borrowing as a result of the President's plan.

The President's ill-conceived student loan giveaway is a tremendous disservice to taxpayers—and a terrible move for our economic health.

As I said, it does nothing to address the real problem, which is the high cost of higher education, which is why last week, I joined Senator CASSIDY to introduce a resolution of disapproval to block the President's plan. And I encourage Members of both parties to support this resolution. Anyone who cares about actually addressing the cost of higher education should oppose a program that not only fails to solve the underlying problems but is actually likely to make things worse.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING JIMMY BUFFETT

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the remarkable life of a legendary native of Mississippi whose music is synonymous with the spirit of summertime and enjoying life: Jimmy Buffett.

Born in Pascagoula, MS, Jimmy Buffett's journey began in the heart of the South. His music touches the heart of those well beyond Mississippi or the South, but there is no denying Jimmy's music embodies the very essence of the South, with its warm hospitality, vibrant culture, and distinctive charm.

Jimmy's early years were filled with the sights and sounds of Mississippi. The Sun shining over the Gulf of Mexico and many other beautiful experiences of the South would later inspire some of his most beloved songs.

But it was Jimmy's great appetite for adventure that ultimately propelled him to worldwide fame. He embarked on a journey that would take him to the Florida Keys, the Caribbean, and beyond those changes in latitudes. Amid more than 40 musical tours throughout his career, he churned his talents into a diverse business empire and charitable works.

As we reflect on the legacy of this son of a son of a sailor, we cannot help but be inspired by Jimmy Buffett's unyielding commitment to following

his dreams and embracing life. His songs transport us to sandy beaches, where the stresses of life fade away. He reminds us that sometimes we all need to kick back, relax, and take a moment to savor the simple pleasures of life. As Jimmy would put it, "it's 5 o'clock somewhere."

In honoring Jimmy Buffett, we celebrate the man who, through his music, brought us with him on many of his adventures around the Sun, from the Pascagoula Run to the shores of paradise, and we are all better for it.

I have so much gratitude for the joy, laughter, and the inspiration that Jimmy Buffett brought into so many Americans' lives. His music is a timeless reminder that no matter where we come from, we can all find a bit of paradise within ourselves, and, come Monday, it will be all right.

Jimmy Buffett is a true southern storyteller who was generous enough to share his piece of paradise with the world. I have no doubt his legacy will continue to inspire generations to come.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut.

EGYPT

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I want to paint a picture for you just for a moment. It takes place on a tarmac in the Zambian capital of Lusaka, just a few weeks ago, in fact.

A small private jet arrives from Egypt. It lands there, hoping to go unnoticed because of what is on board that jet. But it does get noticed by Zambian authorities. They board the plane, and they find inside a cargo that sounds like something out of a James Bond movie. On board that plane is \$5.7 million in U.S. currency, 602 bars of gold, five pistols, and 126 rounds of ammunition.

To make the story even more bizarre, it turns out that the gold was not actually real. It was fake bars of gold. The currency is real, the ammunition is real, but the gold is fake.

Zambia arrests 12 people, 6 of whom are Egyptian citizens. Immediately, as you can imagine, speculation begins about what is exactly going on.

That is an interesting story, right? But the reason I tell you this story isn't because of what happened in Zambia. It is because of what happened next in Cairo. Six of these individuals were Egyptian citizens. The plane came from Egypt. So, of course, journalists in Cairo start to do some digging. A fact-checking platform named Matsadaash—I am probably butchering the pronunciation, but it is Arabic, roughly, for "don't believe it." They report on the alleged involvement of former Egyptian security officials in the incident, but this kind of truth telling is just not allowed in Egypt today.

Egypt is a closed society. It is a dictatorship in which political dissent is crushed. The free press is essentially nonexistent, and as a consequence, top

officials are allowed to enrich themselves without any accountability.

So what happened to the journalists at Matsadaash is interesting, but it is, frankly, par for the course in Egypt. Here is what happened. In response for doing this reporting, Egyptian security officials went straight to the home of the journalist. They raided his home. They forced him to log onto his computer as they were there, and they forced him to delete the Facebook posts about the issue at hand.

Egypt just wanted this story to disappear, and they were willing to do whatever it took to make this happen. We may never know the full story of what happened in that airport—what was going on with that plane—but what we do know is that the Egyptian Government's reaction is part of a completely predictable pattern to muzzle and silence the truth tellers by force.

Beyond these attacks on Matsadaash, two other journalists covering the episode were also detained immediately after without charge. One of the last remaining independent media outlets in Cairo, Mada Masr has repeatedly been refused a legal license to operate.

Websites that report on this kind of activity of Egyptian officials are shut down as soon as they appear. Activists are regularly jailed for "spreading false news" about human rights violations. Over and over again, the government's playbook is just the same: Shut down voices that are critical of the government and throw in jail people who don't comply.

Around this same time last year, I came down to the Senate floor to make a very similar speech, to talk about an annual decision that the administration has to make with regard to our aid to Egypt.

Now, Congress, in a bipartisan way, cares about this campaign of brutal repression against the press and political dissent in Egypt. That is why our annual appropriations bill limits the amount of money the administration can send to Egypt, depending on the government's human rights record.

Specifically, this year, Congress has said that \$320 million of the aid we send, which is roughly about a quarter of the aid, can't go to Egypt unless the administration certifies that Egypt has made real progress on these questions of political climate, \$85 million of which is tied to the release of specific political prisoners and the remaining \$235 million on broader improvements on questions of human rights and democracy.

Now, I just want to be honest with you. In the past, the Bush administration, the Obama administration, the Trump administration, they just routinely waived these conditions and sent the full amount without any real progress. They said it was about American national security, without any actual evaluation as to what the consequence of withholding the money would be to our national security. But

to the Biden administration's credit, over the past 2 years, they have withheld a portion of Egypt's military aid because of these human rights violations.

And last night, as I was writing this speech, the administration rightly decided to withhold that first tranche—\$85 million tied to the release of political prisoners—because there is just no question, there has not been enough progress.

Why do we know that? Because while Egypt released and has released more than 1,600 political prisoners since early 2022—that is good news—during that same time, they have jailed 5,000 more.

So for every political prisoner Egypt releases, three more are jailed. That is one step forward and three steps back. That is not the kind of “clear and consistent progress in releasing political prisoners” that the law requires. The administration was right to withhold the \$85 million.

But what about the remaining \$235 million? I would argue that the answer is just as simple. The Biden administration needs to hold the line. As evidenced by the response to the fake gold-filled plane, political repression is getting worse, not better, in Egypt.

Now, every year there are some people who argue that even though Egypt really hasn't made any progress on human rights, they should get the money anyway, in the name of national security; that if we dare to withhold even a small portion of that money, Egypt is going to stop cooperating with us and they are going to run to Russia or China instead.

But as we have seen in the last 2 years when the administration did withhold a portion of the \$1.3 billion, the sky did not fall. Yes, I will admit to you our diplomats in Cairo probably had some very tough conversations, and the Egyptians certainly have made life a little bit more difficult for our diplomats around the edges, but the core security relationship remains intact. Why is that?

It is because the things that we want Egypt to do that are good for our national security—like working to keep the situation in Gaza as stable as possible through its relationship with Hamas, ensuring the free flow of commerce and U.S. warships through the Suez Canal, keeping counterterrorism operations going in the Sinai—President Sisi does all those things because it is in Egypt's independent national security interest to do so, not because we pay them to do it.

Maybe when we started giving them a billion dollars in aid back in the 1980s, Egypt, in fact, complied with our national security requests because of that monetary relationship, but today Egypt engages in those activities because they have an independent reason to do so.

In fact, it is telling that even though the Egyptians continue to receive a billion dollars per year in military aid,

even with that money, they are reportedly, and have been reportedly, seeking to do deals with the Russians and the Chinese.

Earlier this year, reporting on leaked documents revealed that Egypt had made a secret deal to provide Russia, in the middle of the Ukraine war, with 40,000 rockets. Now, only after a flurry of high-level diplomatic interventions did the Egyptians change course.

And despite a reported request in March of this year from Secretary Austin for Egypt to help Ukraine, the Egyptians have not yet done so. And so the question is, Is this the behavior of a country that we call a key security partner?

And let me be clear, this decision that the administration is going to make, it matters far beyond Egypt. If we say human rights and democracy matters to America, then it has to matter in more than words. When we cut corners and we fail to hold our partners accountable for human rights abuses, people notice.

Now, I am not naive. I know that the question of whether we withhold a couple hundred million dollars in security assistance from President Sisi is not going to convince him to end his brutal campaign of political repression. But when we walk the walk, not just talk the talk, on human rights, another audience hears us: activists, the people who are doing this work on the streets in places like Cairo. Those who are fighting for democracy and human rights in countries with little of either, they gather courage from knowing that the United States is on their side. And it is those forces, those organic, domestic forces, that truly make change. But when we keep on doing business as usual with Saudi Arabia or Tunisia or Egypt, despite their behavior, we send a signal to democracy activists that we aren't serious, that we don't have their back.

And so I am glad for the administration's decision last night to withhold a part of the funding that Congress has required to be withheld unless we see significant progress on human rights. And my belief is that there is only one decision to be made on the remaining dollars because the record is clear, Egypt continues to help us on national security priorities where our interests align, and there is good reason to continue a security relationship with Cairo to preserve those interests.

In other areas like the war in Ukraine, Egypt has not been a helpful partner, and we need to be clear-eyed about our security relationship with Egypt and also about Egypt's human rights record.

The decision the administration will make this week about holding the Egyptians accountable for progress on human rights, it is critical to American credibility. And for that reason, I would urge the administration to finish the job and withhold the full \$320 million as required by the fiscal year 2022 appropriations act until Egypt's

human rights and democracy record improves.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON BRADSHER NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARDIN). Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Bradsher nomination?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas and nays are requested.

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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), and the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ).

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 46, as follows:

(Rollcall Vote No. 224 Ex.)

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rounds
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Sinema
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Lujan	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Cassidy	Menendez	Van Hollen
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Feinstein	Ossoff	Welch
Fetterman	Peters	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Reed	Wyden
Hassan	Rosen	

NAYS—46

Barrasso	Grassley	Ricketts
Blackburn	Hagerty	Risch
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Braun	Hoeben	Rubio
Britt	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Budd	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Capito	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Collins	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cotton	Lummis	Tillis
Cramer	Marshall	Tuberville
Crapo	McConnell	Vance
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Mullin	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	
Graham	Paul	

NOT VOTING—4

Cruz	Markey
Duckworth	Padilla

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). 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.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows: