

Hamas's unprovoked terrorist attack on innocent Israelis and Israel's measures of self-defense. It is ridiculous. What can we say? What can we say to our young students in elementary schools and middle schools and high schools as they look at these so-called elite campuses where they are taking down American flags? What do we say to our young students watching anti-Semitism rage on college campuses? What do we say when they ask the questions that they ask me: Why do they hate the Jews so much? And who will stand in the gap—not just with them, before them?

I say there is not a single Republican in the U.S. Senate who is blocking this resolution. I say not I will but I must stand.

Why can't we just say anti-Semitism on college campuses is wrong? Why can't we have a full stop right there? Perhaps it is because the politics of it is so entangled in the quagmire pit, we must have everything thrown into the bucket, as opposed to just speaking the truth as it is right now on college campuses. Why can't we just condemn anti-Semitism on its face? Why is it so hard for my Democratic colleagues to condemn what Senator SANDERS says—and I agree—is the oldest form of hate in the world? Why can't we just do that right now? We can. But politics suggests that to be politically correct, we must include everybody. Well, everybody is not being impacted like our Jewish students today. Why is it so hard to speak without a forked tongue on such a powerful issue that deserves our moral clarity?

It is Jewish students being forced out of the classrooms and out of the dorms. It is Jewish students facing violence today. I get frustrated by the fact that so often we just feel sorry for those poor kids. I get tired of hearing people say: Well, you know, there is this larger group of folks who need to be protected. Mr. President, 2,000 arrests for violence specifically focused on and targeting Jewish students.

Every single child—I don't care what race you are, what religion—has a right to go to campus safely, but in today's America, it is the Jewish student—the Jewish student—who can't prepare for a midterm in a library. It is the Jewish student who can't walk to class without hoping and praying that law enforcement is there.

We deserve—we deserve—better. America deserves leadership that is unequivocal when it matters the most. We deserve leadership that speaks to the issue of the day, today and every day. That is why people are so disgusted with politics.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, well, I would agree with the Senator from South Carolina on one point: People are disgusted with politics. And maybe the reason they are disgusted with politics is, despite what the vast majority of the American people want, the U.S.

Government is continuing to provide billions of dollars in military aid to the rightwing, extremist Netanyahu government. The Senator from South Carolina said it is a coalition government. It is. It is rightwing extremists in coalition with out-and-out racists. That is the coalition. And people are disgusted because they don't want to see their money going to kill more women and children in Gaza.

Now, the Senator from South Carolina says that I am muddying the waters. Really? Well, I would suggest that the Senator from South Carolina remember what happened a number of months ago in November, I believe, of 2023. Three young Palestinian college students were shot at close range in my city. Islamophobia in this country is on the rise. If you are a Palestinian walking the streets, you better be careful.

So the idea that we should not, as a nation and as a Congress, come together to address anti-Semitism—absolutely. But Islamophobia? We have, as you know, some people out there talking about the Chinese flu and “kung flu.” If you think that does not provoke anti-Asian behavior on the part of some, you would be mistaken.

So I think what is appropriate is for us to condemn anti-Semitism, which is exactly what my resolution does, but make it clear that all forms of bigotry in this country are unacceptable.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of my resolution, which is at the desk; further, that the resolution be agreed to; that the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I think the Senator and I could do this all night long. I would be happy to, frankly. I don't think we will get to the place where we just have a clear statement condemning anti-Semitism. So for all the reasons I have already noted and made, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces, on behalf of the Majority Leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 106-398, as amended by Public Law 108-7, and in consultation with the Chairs of the Senate Committee on Armed Services and the Senate Committee on Finance, the appointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the United States China Economic and Security Review Commission: Michael Kuiken of the District of Columbia for a term beginning January 1, 2024 and expiring December 31, 2025.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar No. 572 and Calendar No. 573; that there be 2 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form on each nomination; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

FAA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2024

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Senate has begun a crucial task: consideration of a bill to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration. The FAA's authorization expired on September 30, and Congress has since passed three short-term extensions—the latest of which will expire on May 10.

For weeks, the House and Senate have been engaged in negotiations to work through differences in the long-term extension bill. Last week, negotiators released a compromise bill. Here in the Senate, my colleague Senator DUCKWORTH had an important role in authoring the bill. She is a former Blackhawk helicopter pilot and an Iraq War veteran. I can think of no better person to lead this effort than her.

The compromise bill addresses several pressing issues for our national aviation system.

One priority I advocated for, which was included, is increased funding for the Airport Improvement Program. This program provides grants to airports for planning and development projects, through both entitlement and competitive awards.

More than 80 airports in Illinois receive funding through this program, and the awards have had a significant effect on enhancing the safety and efficiency of our State's airports. Just last spring, Quincy Regional Airport was awarded a \$14 million competitive AIP grant for its runway reconstruction project. I was pleased to see that the bill will increase annual AIP funding from \$3.3 billion to \$4 billion.

I also supported the inclusion of a new grant program to help airports dispose of and replace a type of harmful

“forever chemicals,” called PFAS, found in firefighting foam. Exposure to these chemicals has been linked to cancer and other serious health effects—and now, efforts to combat exposure at airports thankfully will have a dedicated funding stream.

Another crucial issue the bill addresses is the air traffic controller shortage. My office has heard from air traffic controllers in Illinois whose towers have long been understaffed. Air traffic controllers work 10-hour days up to 6 days per week, in one of the most stressful and exhausting jobs in America. Their work is critical to the safety of our national aviation system—and we owe it to them to provide relief and better working conditions. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am glad our fiscal year 2024 transportation appropriations bill increased FAA funding to hire 1,800 new controllers and improve training facilities.

This FAA reauthorization bill builds upon this by requiring the FAA to improve staffing standards and set maximum hiring targets. I advocated for a provision in the Senate FAA bill that would have established another FAA training academy. Unfortunately, this was not included. But the bill directs the FAA to develop a plan to expand its training capacity and submit it to the Commerce Committee. I hope we continue this discussion.

As commercial travel has returned to pre-pandemic levels, the aviation industry has sounded alarms that the demand for aviation professionals may soon exceed supply. That is why another priority of mine has been to expand funding for Aviation Workforce Development grants. The bill authorizes \$60 million annually to invest in three grant programs to recruit and prepare aviation professionals and pilots. In Illinois, the aviation industry is an economic engine, generating more than \$95 billion in economic activity across 500,000 jobs. We need to continue our investments in its future leaders.

My other priorities have been focused on consumer protections. In October, I wrote to Secretary Buttigieg and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Chopra about troubling reports that airlines are engaging in unfair, abusive, and deceptive practices related to their loyalty programs. I worry that airlines are making it harder to redeem rewards.

I supported a provision, secured by my colleague Senator MARKEY of Massachusetts, in the Senate FAA bill that would have required airline frequent flyer programs to provide at least 90 days' notice before reducing or devaluing rewards. This was not included in the final bill; however, Senator MARKEY and I are introducing an amendment that would restore this provision. The bill does include some other consumer protections, including the creation of create Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretary position at the De-

partment of Transportation's Office of Aviation Consumer Protection.

I have also been focused on ensuring Illinois communities have adequate air service. I have heard from constituents in my hometown of Springfield that the current flights to and from Chicago offered by American Airlines do not reflect demand. The Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport in Springfield is neither a hub airport nor an Essential Air Service community. This places it in a gray area for Federal resources to ensure air service.

I requested language that would have directed DOT, in coordination with the FAA, to study ways to improve existing Federal programs—and explore new ones—to help communities like this retain sufficient flight service and schedules that reflect demand. This was not included in the final bill, but I have introduced an amendment with Senator GRASSLEY to add this study to the bill.

I am also pleased to see the FAA bill would allow DOT to impose penalties for Essential Air Service providers that try to terminate or reduce service to these communities.

I will continue advocating for these priorities throughout the Senate process. And I urge my colleagues to swiftly pass the FAA reauthorization bill to prevent a lapse in resources for our aviation system, those who operate it, and all who fly.

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, this week, we celebrate Public Service Recognition Week. Each year since 1985, this special week has been observed in honor of our Nation's public servants. Today, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation for the 20.2 million Federal, State, county, and local public servants in the United States of America.

Our country relies on the critical work of the everyday heroes in the public sector workforce, and we owe them a debt of gratitude for their steadfast service. From astronauts to astrophysicists, caseworkers to court clerks, detectives to doctors, service-members to superintendents, teachers to transit workers, America's public servants comprise one of our Nation's most critical and often maligned assets. Every American feels the impact of the crucial work public servants perform in all aspects of their lives. Thanks to first responders, service-members, social workers, and every public servant in between, over 330 million Americans can rest knowing their loved ones are protected, the rule of law is respected, and that the public sector is here to make their lives more effective.

The talented public servants who tirelessly work to improve our Nation and the lives of the people who comprise it are amongst the bravest and most honorable individuals on the globe.

On their first day of school, our children are entrusted to the teachers who provide them an educational foundation to guide them throughout their lives. When a novel disease impacts our communities, it is researchers who innovate and pursue medical solutions, as our doctors, nurses, and EMTs care for patients on the frontlines. It is our postal workers who deliver critical checks, medication, and information to our veterans and seniors who await the arrival of benefits they have earned.

America's public servants demonstrate their commitment to their communities in a diverse set of essential roles. What all members of the public sector workforce have in common, though, is their motivation to help our Nation progress and prosper.

The public sector workforce—particularly at the Federal level—have a sense of duty and a love of their community and country that compel them. So many public servants could earn higher salaries in private sector jobs, but their motivation is more than pecuniary gain.

At the heart of the U.S. Government are civil servants, individuals who are classified as nonpartisan career Federal employees. These public servants are not committed to a particular ideology or political figure in their official capacity. In recent years, however, these folks have faced threats to their civil service status at the hands of the very partisan influence they are supposed to be protected from.

Civil servants elect to work for the American people first, and they deserve the opportunity to carry out their service without fear of being relieved of duties or retaliation based on non-allegiance to a political party. That is why I commend the Biden administration and the Office of Personnel Management for issuing the final rule in opposition to the previous administration's Schedule F classification.

Our civil servants honorably serve our Nation without political fear or favor. OPM's reiteration of support for nonpartisan Federal employee protections is a crucial victory, not only for the 2.2 million individuals currently under this classification but for every American and the integrity of our institutions.

Every year, the Samuel J. Heyman Public Service to America Medals are awarded to esteemed Federal employees who are recognized by their Agency colleagues and the nonprofit Partnership for Public Service for their distinguished service. This year, the seventh State admitted to the Union—my home State of Maryland—is proud to celebrate seven outstanding individuals nominated as finalists. All of them are highly deserving of recognition for their service.

Today, I would like to take a moment to thank these Marylanders:

Wanda Brown and Darnita Trower of the Internal Revenue Service; Judy Chen and Jay Evans of the USDA Agricultural Research Service; Hari Kalla of the Federal