

### AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1613. Mr. WARNOCK submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1388 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER) to the bill H.R. 815, to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements relating to the eligibility of veterans to receive reimbursement for emergency treatment furnished through the Veterans Community Care program, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

### TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

**SA 1613.** Mr. WARNOCK submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1388 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER) to the bill H.R. 815, to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements relating to the eligibility of veterans to receive reimbursement for emergency treatment furnished through the Veterans Community Care program, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 71, line 18, insert “, or be allocated to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for substance use treatment and prevention activities” before the period.

### RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions submitted earlier today: S. Res. 560, S. Res. 561, S. Res. 562, S. Res. 563, S. Res. 564.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent the resolutions be agreed to; the preambles be agreed to; and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

### PROVIDING FOR A CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 815

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Con. Res. 29.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 29) providing for a correction in the enrollment of H.R. 815.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. I further ask the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the

motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 29) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in today's Record under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

### APPOINTMENT

The Presiding OFFICER. The Chair announces, on behalf of the Republican Leader, pursuant to Public Law 101-509, the appointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress: Debbie Ramsey of Kentucky.

### APPOINTMENTS AUTHORITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the upcoming adjournment of the Senate, the President of the Senate, the President pro tempore, and the majority and minority leaders be authorized to make appointments to commissions, committees, boards, conferences, or interparliamentary conferences authorized by law, by concurrent action of the two Houses, or by order of the Senate.

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

### ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2024, THROUGH MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2024

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn to then convene for pro forma sessions only, with no business being conducted, on the following dates and times and that following each pro forma session, the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Friday, February 16, at 3:30 p.m.; Tuesday, February 20, at 9 a.m.; Friday, February 23, at 3 p.m.; further, that when the Senate adjourns on Friday, February 23, it stand adjourned until 3 p.m. on Monday, February 26; that on Monday, following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and Senator CARDIN be recognized to deliver Washington's Farewell Address, as provided under the previous order; and that following his remarks, morning business be closed; that following the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Becerra nomination; further, that the cloture motions filed during today's session ripen at 5:30 p.m. on Monday.

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

### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I

ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order following the remarks of Senator WELCH.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

### SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, this is indeed a historic day—the passage of the national security supplemental appropriations bill. I want to commend the extraordinary work of Leader SCHUMER, of Leader MCCONNELL, of our Appropriations chair and vice chair, Senator MURRAY and Senator COLLINS, and also our colleagues who worked so hard on the bipartisan border agreement that was ultimately repudiated by the Republicans.

The supplemental includes important additional military aid for Ukraine and Taiwan and aid for Israel and humanitarian aid for the Palestinians and other vulnerable populations.

I unequivocally support the additional aid for Ukraine. It is facing an existential threat. We must pass that aid. I am very pleased to see that Ukraine is going to be receiving the aid it desperately needs. Putin must be stopped.

The other provision in the supplemental I strongly support is funding for the humanitarian aid for Palestinians and for humanitarian catastrophes around the globe. But the situation in Gaza is what is of great concern to me. It is horrific.

Two million Palestinians have been uprooted from their homes. Those homes have been reduced to rubble. Folks are desperately seeking to survive. They lack adequate food, safe water, and shelter. Many are injured without anything remotely resembling sufficient medical care or shelter.

I introduced a resolution, cosponsored by 15 of my colleagues, urging the administration to dramatically increase access and delivery of humanitarian aid for Palestinians in Gaza, and I am gratified that the supplemental does include several billions of dollars for that purpose.

But despite these provisions that I do support, I voted against the supplemental for one key reason: I cannot in good conscience support sending billions of additional taxpayer dollars for Prime Minister Netanyahu's military campaign in Gaza. It is a campaign that has killed and wounded a shocking number of civilians. It has created a massive humanitarian crisis with no end in sight. It has inflamed tensions in the Middle East, eroding support among Arab States that had been aligned with Israel. And, of course, it has severely compromised any remaining hope—almost all remaining hope for the two-state solution that we all know is ultimately essential for peace in the Middle East. And this is an opinion that is not just my own, but it is

expressed by a large majority of Vermonters who have contacted me and shared their dismay at the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.

During my years in Congress, like the Presiding Officer, I have voted for tens of billions of dollars in aid for Israel, but I cannot send more taxpayer dollars to support Prime Minister Netanyahu's continued bombardment in the wholesale destruction of Gaza, knowing the calamity that more U.S. bombs and artillery shells will cause for countless more civilians who had nothing whatsoever to do with the atrocities that were committed by Hamas terrorists on October 7.

As I made clear on November 28 when I called for an indefinite cease-fire in Gaza, really for the purpose of saving civilian lives, we all do want Hamas gone. They are terrorists. The depth and cruelty Hamas perpetrated against innocent, defenseless people, many of them women and children, was appalling. It was reminiscent of the brutality of ISIS. The viciousness of the Hamas attack was intended to terrorize and traumatize all Israelis. And it goes without saying that Israel has a right and responsibility to pursue those who ordered and carried out the October 7 attacks.

But Israel's enemy is Hamas, not the Palestinian people, and neither Israel nor any country has the right to use lethal force in ways that violate the laws of armed conflict by inflicting egregious and disproportionate harm to civilians. Palestinian civilians are, by definition, innocent. They are defenseless, as were Hamas's victims.

What has occurred in Gaza using weapons and munitions provided by the United States and what will continue to occur as long as Prime Minister Netanyahu pursues his current war strategy is more of the same. It is a strategy which I and many others believe is deeply flawed. It has cost more than 28,000 Palestinian lives.

Netanyahu's war plan has never been articulated beyond his oft-repeated refrain of pursuing nothing less than the complete destruction of Hamas and the release of the hostages.

Like many of us, I have spoken with families of hostages who are desperately waiting for the safe return of their loved ones, who are trapped in the vast network of Hamas tunnels—narrow, cloistered, dark tunnels—as Israeli bombs explode above. It is hard to imagine anything that is more terrifying for the hostages, as well as for their families, as the weeks turn into months with no end in sight.

Since Israel launched its invasion of Gaza nearly 4 months ago, Prime Minister Netanyahu has said nothing about what Israel's strategy is for the future of Gaza or the people of Gaza after Gaza is in ruins when the war ends.

Obliterating civilian infrastructure—and that is happening now with demolitions set to take down homes and infrastructure—makes it impossible for people to have a place to re-

turn to. Intentionally reducing to rubble hospitals, schools, mosques, and apartment buildings is not right. Forcibly displacing 2 million people and creating a humanitarian catastrophe and looming famine, this is not an acceptable strategy.

The inescapable conclusion is that the Netanyahu government is not listening—is not listening to the White House and President Biden, is not listening to key Arab governments that are imploring Israel to change course.

Their belief, which I share, is that the way to prevent a wider war and begin building a safer and ultimately more secure Middle East is to stop killing and otherwise mistreating innocent Palestinians.

Prime Minister Netanyahu, who has rejected out of hand the right of Palestinians to have a state of their own, is stubbornly pursuing what can only be called a scorched-earth policy. It is difficult not to conclude that his enemy is not only Hamas but the Palestinians.

To make matters worse, he and other Israeli officials continue to deny that there is a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

How much worse does the situation have to get in Gaza? How much wider of a war in the Middle East will be accepted before we use the leverage America does have, including the withholding of additional lethal aid, to get Israel to stop that bombing campaign, to negotiate a cease-fire and the release of the remaining hostages, and to allow the dramatic increase in food and water and other humanitarian aid that is needed to prevent the widespread starvation, death, and disease the United Nations and other relief organizations warn are imminent, and to negotiate an end to the war?

The massive destruction and loss of innocent life is not making Israel more secure. To the contrary, it has eroded progress Israel has made with its neighboring Arab States, it has inflamed tensions in the Middle East, and it has incited attacks on American soldiers. It has severely damaged Israel's reputation on the world stage and set back the cause of peace in the Middle East, which we must continue to strive to achieve.

The possibility of a two-state solution, which Prime Minister Netanyahu has publicly rejected, is on life support. Throughout the years, the United States has provided tens of billions of dollars in aid to the Netanyahu government, in effect consistently financing a government that implements policies that we support for a two-state solution but pursues policies that make it impossible for a viable independent State of Palestine to emerge. That has been endorsed—a two-state solution—by Republican and Democratic administrations. We have to mean what we say.

This must end, and it must end now by sparing innocent Palestinians in

Israel's pursuit of Hamas and renewing vigorous efforts to create a viable Palestinian State—something the Biden administration is doing energetically.

Mr. President, a majority of the Senate has voted to approve additional military aid for Israel. I know that the White House will not treat that as a blank check. We must increase pressure on the Netanyahu government to respect international humanitarian law.

I am very encouraged by the White House's release on February 8 of an unprecedented national security memorandum based on an amendment sponsored by Senator VAN HOLLEN and cosponsored by many of us, including the Presiding Officer. It articulates a global policy and reporting requirements that put Israel and other recipients of U.S. military aid on notice that our aid is contingent on their written commitment and adherence to U.S. and international laws of armed conflict and allowing the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid.

I also urge the Secretary of State to apply the Leahy law, passed by my predecessor, Patrick Leahy of Vermont. Apply that to Israel. This has not been the practice.

For far too long, successive administrations have failed to apply the law to the Israel Defense Forces despite many incidents when the IDF was credibly implicated in violations of the human rights of Palestinians. The Leahy Law is the law of the United States. It should be enforced.

Finally, Mr. President, I do want to say a few words about the southern border.

Our immigration system is broken. Our southern border is overwhelmed with thousands of would-be immigrants on a near daily basis. Asylum seekers can wait 5 years or more to plant roots in this country before learning their fate. They are forced to wait to join the workforce when they are here and face bureaucratic backlogs. Most potential immigrants have no meaningful way to enter the U.S. legally, given the failure of Congress to improve the system for 30 years. Cities all around our country are dealing with the consequences and are exhausted. In essence, we don't have a functioning immigration system.

I commend my colleagues, Senators SINEMA, LANKFORD, and MURPHY, for their extraordinary work, and I am very disappointed that that effort was rejected and repudiated by our Republican colleagues.

The agreement proposed reforms to improve border security that both Republicans and Democrats have long recognized that we need in order to significantly improve our operations at the border and have a secure border. It provides that agreement for additional pathways for legal migration, and we need legal migration.

Our rural communities, like those in Vermont, rely on immigrant and seasonal farmworkers and know how important improving our legal migration system is to our rural economy.

We need to address the limited number of family- and employment-based visas to address the backlog of green card applications that already exceed 10 million people, and we need more worker visas and other alternatives for our employers to be able to get the job done.

I voted last week to proceed on the first version of that border agreement that was worked out by our colleagues in the hope that we could work and pass amendments, improve it, and pass it. But the Republicans who first embraced that agreement or that effort turned their backs once Donald Trump insisted they take no action to secure the southern border before the November election. Donald Trump has a campaign, and we have a responsibility to govern, and that includes taking action on the southern border.

That situation is the result of inaction over many years. Republicans and Democrats can take credit for some of those failures, but we have to do there what we have done in so many other places—work together to get a secure border, find pathways for legal migration, and have safety and security at a border we control.

I am going to end where I began, and that is by thanking Leader SCHUMER and Leader MCCONNELL for their extraordinary effort in getting us to this vote on this important legislation.

I also want to say to the Senate staff and to our Senate pages, who have been here all night: Thank you. We are very grateful for the work that you do. This was not just an important day; it has been an important several months where the business of the Senate in debating the important issues of our time has occurred, and you all have been part of history.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I know that the hour is—not late. I guess it is early, but the staff have been on the floor all night, and the pages are exhausted. They have been working.

I wanted just to say—and I know the Presiding Officer doesn't deserve to have to spend 5 minutes listening to me. I just want to say a word, as we get out of here, about where we are. I want to thank the Senator from Vermont for his moral leadership and for his clarity in this difficult time.

Not that long ago, we had a conversation with the President of Ukraine, President Zelenskyy. It was while we were still in the midst of COVID, and we were meeting on Zoom. He said to the U.S. Senate that the Ukrainian people were fighting so they could live their lives the way we live our lives—

the way we live our lives in the United States.

More recently, in our last meeting with him, which was in person, he came here and met us in the Old Senate—or in, I guess, the Mansfield Room. He said to us that they were going to continue to fight; that if we didn't support them, they would lose but that they would never stop fighting because the Ukrainian people know what freedom is about, and they wouldn't stop. He thought that they could succeed if we continued to support them. He was very clear about that.

It wasn't clear to me that we were going to be able to fulfill our commitment. There have been moments—I have been here now 14 years or so. There have been moments when I have really wondered whether the U.S. Senate is just a relic of its former self; that our democracy is a relic of its former self; that the evidence that Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin believe has piled up over the decades and, over the century, has put the United States in a place where it has no capacity to lead anymore. That is what they say at every negotiating table at which we find ourselves with them—that the 20th century was our century but that this is a different century. It is a century for totalitarianism, a century for authoritarianism, a century where might makes right.

As the Presiding Officer knows, my mom was born in Warsaw in 1938—a Polish Jew. It was the worst place on planet Earth that anybody could have been born at the worst moment when anybody could be born. I am going to spare you because we are here and we have got to move on, but they lived through the worst that humanity had to offer—my mom and my grandparents, Halina Klejman and John Klejman.

They finally came here to the United States of America, after the war was over, to rebuild their shattered lives, and they said to me that they had been happy here ever since—that was their language—with humanity's greatest treasures: democracy, freedom, and love as they described it. They hoped that, in the course of our lives, their grandchildren would be able to spread these treasures around the world.

Tonight, that is what we have done here in the U.S. Senate. Tonight, we have said that the rule of law matters; that democracy matters; that we recognize that the fight the Ukrainian people have been in for the last 2 years—a very unexpected fight with unexpected successes along the way and more predictable setbacks along the way—is an extraordinary testament to the Ukrainian people's courage, to their stamina, to their willingness to fight just to be free, just to live, as President Zelenskyy said, the life that we have lived, to die in the cause of democracy. That is what they have done over the last 2 years.

I hate to say this, but it is true. There were moments over the last 4

months or 6 months or so when it was not clear that the U.S. Senate was going to be able to overcome our divisions to support the Ukrainian people in their battle even with the knowledge that we have a particular role to play, at least in theory, as the United States of America when it comes to battles around the world between democracy and totalitarianism—an obligation we have never fulfilled perfectly but an obligation that at least, since World War II, we have had to carry uniquely among all nations.

I will say, as I come to a close, that I have had my doubts over the last 14 years about whether this place could operate again; whether we could make hard decisions on behalf of the people—our children and our grandchildren; whether it was just a relic of some bygone era. That has been particularly hard for me because I actually believe in democracy. I believe in the wisdom that is created not from, you know, what I think or what you think or what the Senator from Georgia thinks or even what the pages who are sitting on this floor think but the wisdom that comes from the collision of our disagreements and the collision of our disputes—disagreements and disputes that can only happen in a free country with the First Amendment and the ability to express oneself, with a free press.

The only places—the only human societies—where everybody agrees with each other are totalitarian societies where there is somebody in charge, telling everybody what to think, like Putin's Russia, like the situation in England when the Founders were trying to break away into a new republic.

And what I want to say to the American people tonight—or this morning—is that not that we are out of the woods and not that they can take their foot off the gas but that, today, we actually did something pretty significant here in this place, and we stood with the Ukrainian people, who have stood for democracy for these 2 years, who have given their lives just to live their lives the way we live our lives after having been invaded by a tyrant who had violated the post-World War II order.

The U.S. Senate not only supported it but did it with a vote of 70, with a vote where 20 Republicans split from President Trump's view of this world, which is a very different view than either Democratic or Republican Presidents have had since World War II. They were willing to split with that for the good of our Nation, for the good of our world. That is not an easy thing to do. It is not an easy vote for them to take, and I don't think there was one of us who would have predicted 4 months ago that we would have ended up in a place with those 20 votes.

So I want to say thank you to the people who took those votes. I want to say thank you to Senator SCHUMER for his leadership, for his patience. I know there are days when he feels like I am the biggest complainer around this place, but he did an amazing job in