

It has been alleged throughout history that republics are ungrateful, self-obsessed, self-absorbed, selfish, self-regarding. America has subsequently proven otherwise. If you ever doubt this, visit Pleasant View Cemetery in Monroe County, IN. You see, the people of Unionville were heartbroken when the monument of Private Riddle was knocked down. So Edith Clark, the cemetery's caretaker, paid \$600 to have the sculpture restored and resurrected. Then the community held a bake and yard sale to help her recover the cost.

Patriotism—never forget.

Today, he shows wear. The brim of his hat is broken; the bayonet from his rifle is lost; part of his ear is missing; so are a few fingers. But Private Thomas Forest Riddle stands once more, and his memory remains. His watch continues, and America's gratitude goes on.

So today, we remember Private Riddle and all who have given their lives for our freedom on this grand Memorial Day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, the first stanza of the national anthem ends with:

O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

We sing this part as a declaration, but if you read the lyrics of the Star-Spangled Banner, the sentence actually ends with a question mark. Francis Scott Key intended the line to be sung as a question rather than a statement. That is fitting because while our freedom may seem concrete, it is never a guarantee. Our freedom depends on brave men and women who are willing to answer the call to defend our great country.

Over the years, our national anthem took on a feeling of confidence and assurance rather than uncertainty. That is thanks to the millions of men and women who have answered the call to serve, some of whom made the ultimate sacrifice.

Next week, we recognize Memorial Day. It is not just another long weekend, but it is time to honor our fallen soldiers and reflect on their sacrifices. Today, I would like to recognize two such heroes from my State of Alabama: Michael Hosey and Jason Barfield and their families.

For U.S. Army SSG Michael Wesley Hosey, there was never a question in anyone's mind as to what he wanted to do when he grew up. Every career day, he would always dress up as a soldier. Michael loved reading about history, and he loved our country, so much so that his friends and family gave him the nickname "Merican," with an "m." That is "American" without an "a."

Because Michael was only 17 when he graduated from Clay-Chalkville High School, his dad, also named Michael, had to sign his permission for him to enlist in the Army. As a Vietnam vet-

eran, the elder Michael knew all too well what his son was signing up for. Yet the Hosey family supported Michael's decision to serve his country. There is no question that this courageous young man also came from a courageous family.

Michael graduated from boot camp 3 days after 9/11. He had a gift for learning languages quickly and planned to use this talent to become a communications intelligence specialist. This ability to quickly pick up on a new language, combined with his outgoing personality, made Michael a favorite with the local Afghans.

Members in Michael's unit recall him quickly receiving a dinner invitation from one of the local families shortly after moving into the area. Michael had a giving heart and continued to earn the trust of the locals, especially all the kids.

His sister Laurie recalls him always asking his family to send candy when they sent him a package. At first, she found this odd because Michael wasn't a big candy eater. But they would always send Skittles or gum. She later realized Michael wasn't asking for candy himself but to share with all the kids in the country.

Sadly, Michael lost his life on September 17, 2011, during Operation Enduring Freedom, 1 week before his 28th birthday.

When sharing the story, Laurie wants us to remember that freedom is not free. It is a reality that her and Michael's parents—Condi and the older Michael—still carry with them every single day.

For Marine LCpl Jason Barfield of Ashford, AL, he also was born with a strong desire to serve his country.

His father Ray is a disabled Army veteran and Jason's great-grandfather, also named Jason, was killed in World War II.

Jason lived his life with the goal of making a difference. His mom Kelli says that Jason believed that there was good in everyone. Even if you couldn't find it at first, that just meant to dig a little bit deeper.

Jason lived by the motto that "Every day is a good day."

He also had a gift for music and was in the band at Ashford High School. He enjoyed singing in church, playing the saxophone, and was teaching himself to play the piano. Jason's hard work and talents earned him a 4-year band scholarship to Huntington College. He chose to forgo the scholarship to enlist in the Marines because he wanted to be part of the best.

Kelli remembers asking Jason's recruiter about the dangers that he was signing up for and the sinking feeling when the recruiter replied:

No, ma'am, I can't guarantee that he'll come home.

Jason surprised his family for Christmas in 2010 and spoke about his new goal to reenlist in the military and become a chaplain. The Barfields didn't know this would be their last holiday

that they would spend together. Jason was killed in action on October 24, 2011, at the young age of 22.

Sensing the danger that was ahead of Jason, he pushed eight of his fellow marines, a native translator, and a K-9 out of the way from the booby trap explosion that would claim his own life.

Jason's platoon Sergeant Gunney Thrash said:

His name and his actions for his fellow Marines will outlive all of us.

Jason was a hero. He makes all Alabamans proud.

Michael Wesley Hosey and Jason Barfield are two young men who never got to start a family or fully pursue their dreams. We are forever grateful and indebted to them for their sacrifice that gives us the assurance to sing the national anthem, not with a question mark, but with a declaration that we are the "land of the free and the home of the brave."

I am reminded of the words in John 15:13: Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

We may never have met Michael or Jason, yet they courageously were willing to give their lives for their fellow Americans. We will continue to share their stories to ensure their sacrifices are never, ever forgotten.

As Memorial Day approaches, I hope we take time to honor Americans that have fallen, along with the great families who have been left behind. May we never forget that freedom is not free.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I want to begin by saying happy anniversary. Happy anniversary.

Thirty-two years ago today, President Clinton signed the National Voter Registration Act into law. The so-called Motor Voter Act—that is what it became known as—made commonsense and unprecedented strides to registering more eligible Americans to vote. Imagine that—taking advantage of the fact that motor vehicle agencies and other State and local government offices that interact with Americans every single day can easily, efficiently, securely assist U.S. citizens with one of the most fundamental rights: registering to vote and participating in our elections.

A little over 3 years after it was signed into law—on May 24, 1996, more precisely—I proudly completed my own training as a deputy registrar in Los

Angeles County, which qualified me to register voters in my own community. Nearly two decades later, I was sworn in as California's 30th secretary of state, becoming the chief elections officer to the most populous and most diverse State in the Nation. Just earlier this year, I was proud to become the ranking member of the Senate Rules and Administration Committee, with jurisdiction over Federal elections. So it would be an understatement for me to say that I am proud to bring my decades of elections administration experience to the discussions and deliberations of this body.

Throughout my time in public service, I have seen personally that one of the single greatest ways to increase not just civic engagement more broadly but voter registration and voter participation more specifically is to meet Americans where they already are. Motor Voter tried to do exactly that—registering voters at State departments of motor vehicles and other public agencies, including State colleges and universities, military recruitment offices, and others.

That is a good thing for our democracy because we should all believe in that most basic of lessons that I believe we all learned in high school civics class—that our democracy works best when its many eligible people participate.

One other place that the National Voter Registration Act can and should extend to is naturalization ceremonies, giving new, eligible U.S. citizens the information they need to register to vote should they want to.

If you have never had the opportunity to attend one before, I can tell you personally that there are few experiences that give you more of that patriotic feeling than inside the four walls of a naturalization ceremony. If you ever had doubts or questions about what it means to be an American, I encourage you to ask a newly naturalized citizen.

When I served as California's secretary of state, it was such an honor to speak at a number of these ceremonies. Part of the sacredness of the experience that I felt was standing up on the stage, looking out at the audience, and being told by the USCIS personnel how many countries were being represented there. Maybe it was dozens of people, maybe it was hundreds of people representing literally dozens or hundreds of countries. So walking into the auditorium, walking into the convention center hall, there were immigrants from countries all over the world, but upon taking that oath and leaving that ceremony, they were all U.S. citizens.

While some people get to that point of naturalization, having been in the country for a couple of years, some after several decades, some coming from working-class families and others from very wealthy families, some families who have been here just a few years and others who have been here maybe multiple generations—maybe

some of these new citizens never had a chance to go to college or even high school. Others were there with not just bachelor's and master's degrees but Ph.D.s, maybe multiple degrees. The one thing that was constant for everybody was that as a U.S. citizen, you now had the right to vote. And in our elections, not only does every vote count, but every vote counts equally. Think about that. How beautiful is that?

As I think about the people who go through the process, I can't help but also think about my parents because they went through the naturalization process. When I see the dozens or hundreds of immigrants becoming citizens, I envision what their preparation was like because it was very similar, no doubt, to what my parents did—taking classes, studying, showing up at every important appointment, filling out all those forms. On the day they finally take the oath of allegiance, they earn the full benefits of U.S. citizenship.

So it was an honor and a privilege to be able to address those audiences as secretary of state and encourage them not just to get involved in the community but to register to vote and exercise their new right to vote. And, of course, I would do it on a nonpartisan basis.

But the statistics tell us that registration amongst naturalized citizens still lags behind other voters. During the 2022 election, only 61 percent of naturalized citizens were registered to vote compared to 70 percent of native-born Americans.

So the data tells us that we have a responsibility to do more here. That is why today I am asking my colleagues to pass the Including New Voters in the Electorate Act, also known as the INVITE Act.

My bill would use the powers of the National Voter Registration Act to designate USCIS field offices as voter registration Agencies, effectively giving our field staff not just the opportunity but the duty to help new, eligible U.S. citizens register to vote. Rather than just hand out a form, it would empower USCIS personnel to actually assist new citizens in completing and returning their voter registration forms.

I can predict what some of the counterargument might be, so let me just say to everyone who regularly expresses concern about "noncitizens voting," I would suggest, what better place to make sure citizens are registered than at a naturalization ceremony?

With the flexibility to work with State and local agencies however they see fit, my bill would take those spaces that are so crucial to our democracy and turn them into catalysts for democratic participation because the responsibilities that come with citizenship don't end upon taking the oath of citizenship; that is just the beginning.

I urge all of my colleagues, Republican and Democrat, to join me in sup-

porting this commonsense bill to invest in and strengthen our democracy.

Notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of my bill, which is at the desk. I further ask unanimous consent 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 an objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I want to thank my friend and colleague the senior Senator from the State of California for his passion in pursuing what is itself a laudable goal, which is helping newly sworn-in, newly naturalized U.S. citizens to register to vote. But I have no choice but to object to this unanimous consent request, this effort to pass it without further debate—without any debate today.

I want to point out that this is a bill that hasn't gone through any of the regular processes. It is therefore inappropriate for us to consider it at this point.

Look, the bill itself was just barely introduced. It hasn't had a hearing, hasn't had a markup before the Senate Judiciary Committee on which we both serve or otherwise, nor has there been any debate on this topic.

No doubt it is important to make sure that our newly naturalized citizens have the opportunity to register to vote, but that puts the cart before the horse in many regards. If we haven't done our homework, we could cause problems.

No one disputes the fact—at least no one disputes the fact now that there are, in fact, noncitizens voting in Federal elections. No one disputes that there are already laws on the books making it a crime for noncitizens to vote in U.S. elections. U.S. Federal elections are for U.S. citizens and no one else, and it is a crime to do otherwise.

We have had some of these discussions over the last year, and in the months leading up to the 2024 general election, there were a lot of unsubstantiated claims made to the effect that noncitizens don't vote. We know now that that is not true. There have been a number of documented instances from this last general election alone in which that happened. This reflects the fact that we often do a poor job of making sure noncitizens don't vote.

On the current voter registration form, the Federal voter registration form, there is just a box, a little box that one checks for the applicant to indicate whether he or she is a U.S. citizen. Provided that he or she checks that box and later signs the form for a driver's license, that person can then obtain voter registration in the same State in which he or she has applied for a driver's license. All we have to go on is that person's word as to citizenship.

No one asks for documentary proof of citizenship—no.

One might ask: Why? Why has no one asked for this, especially if it is a known problem?

Well, this dates back to an interpretation of the 1993 National Voter Registration Act, the NVRA, which is also sometimes referred to as the Motor Voter law. It was a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that interpreted provisions of the NVRA as prohibiting the State officials administering that form, receiving that form, from asking for any kind of proof of citizenship.

Now, that interpretation was, in my view, wrong. I agree with Justice Alito's dissent in that case saying that the statute contains no such requirement; there is nothing in there prohibiting States from doing that. Nonetheless, that ruling stands, remains on the books today, prohibiting State officials, when receiving those forms, from doing any verification, requesting any proof as to citizenship.

That is why I, last year, introduced a bill called the SAFE Act that would amend the National Voter Registration Act to make clear what I believe was already clear but that the Supreme Court got wrong, allowing State officials to request proof of citizenship at the time these documents are submitted and setting requirements for that to happen.

The SAFE Act identifies, establishes, and outlines acceptable documentation for proving citizenship, and it requires the States to set up alternative verification processes for citizens who don't have the normal, necessary, contemplated documentation, including for those instances—very, very common instances—in which a woman marries and thereafter changes her name to a married name not evident on any birth certificate she may have.

When you contemplate the many dozens of women who support the SAVE Act in this Chamber and in the other and who voted for it in the other Chamber, who were part of the process of drafting this bill—they and I and the others who were involved in its drafting, we all went out of our way to make sure that these documentation standards were not unduly onerous. In fact, if anything, they are less onerous than those requirements, those documentation standards that already exist in other areas of the law.

Take, for example, labor and employment. Anytime any American citizen starts a new job as an employee, he or she is required to fill out a form called the I-9. The I-9 form requires an American citizen to provide proof of citizenship. And if you are not an American citizen, then you have to provide proof of your work eligibility, providing proof of your visa and the documentation that goes along with that.

Now, just as it is true that married women who have changed their name to their married name, a married last name that is different than that found on their birth certificate—just as

women every single day across this country are able to start a new job without that being an impediment, we have made sure that the SAVE Act would leave things the same way. If anything, we made it easier in the context of casting this sacred, important vote and registering to become eligible to cast such a vote.

The legislation, the SAVE Act, also compels States to purge noncitizens from voter rolls and establishes Federal penalties for intentionally registering noncitizens to vote in Federal elections.

Over the last 4 years, many, many millions upon millions of illegal aliens have entered our country's borders, and of those, a nonzero but ultimately unknown number of them were improperly registered to vote. No one disputes that this has happened. They don't now; they didn't last summer; they don't now because the proof is there, and it remains undisputed.

At a time when trust in voting is as important as it has ever been, if not more so, we must stop any avenue for foreign election interference, and we need to pass the SAVE Act.

Voting is both a sacred right and an important responsibility that accompanies American citizenship, and allowing people—people of other countries, people of other countries who are not citizens of our country—to violate the law and to access our elections and vote in our elections contrary to the law is a great blow to our security and to our self-governance.

The House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the SAVE Act a few weeks ago, and now it is our turn to pass the SAVE Act and that we must do.

In light of the foregoing and in light of the fact that, if we were to take a step like that contemplated and proposed by my friend and colleague—and he is both, the senior Senator from California—without putting in place these additional safeguards that we need in the SAVE Act, safeguards that are no more intrusive—and, in fact, if anything, are less intrusive—than those already in existence in everyday events like starting a new job, I must object, and I hereby do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from California.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I think I tried to make the point clear. While I respect where my colleague from the State of Utah is coming from, I just fundamentally disagree.

The National Voter Registration Act, which this body passed on a bipartisan basis back in 1993, was designed to expand voter registration opportunities by making it easier for eligible Americans to register when they interact with government Agencies, plain and simple, and that is all this bill seeks to do, by designating USCIS as a voter registration entity under the NVRA.

And the point is simple. When anybody goes to apply for a driver's license

or a State ID, as you are filling out those forms, you do add name, date of birth, your address, you are signing all that same information for a driver's license or an ID that you are putting on the voter registration card or form when you are registering to vote.

And yes, you do sign as to the accuracy of the information under penalty of perjury. So it is not just the check the box nonchalantly; you are signing under penalty of perjury. And there have been occasions when people are charged with false registration or improper registration. So the laws are working. The instances of ineligible voters voting are very, very rare, but they happen. That means our laws are working.

So we will keep trying to work on the INVITE Act, but I encourage my colleague to think about not just the spirit of this proposal but the context of the success of the NVRA over the last several decades.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 22

Mr. LEE. Madam President, we need to remember a couple of things. First, when someone has gone through the process of immigrating to the United States, they have completed a journey—perhaps a lengthy odyssey—of moving to the United States, applying for and ultimately obtaining U.S. citizenship. They have provided a lot of documentation. They have done a lot of things to make that happen.

And it would be an insult to those who are U.S. citizens, whether natural-born or naturalized citizens, to make it easy for people to cheapen that, to undermine it, to dilute that by coming in and saying: You know, I am filling out my driver's license application, and all I have to do here is check a box—check a box, sign my name saying, yes, I am a U.S. citizen.

Well, you know, that is not an option in other areas where citizenship is required. It is absolutely not an option, for example, in applying for a passport, which is one of the documents that can be provided and often is provided when someone completes the process of filling out an I-9 and thereby establishing their work eligibility as a U.S. citizen. One of the forms that they can provide to help establish that is a U.S. passport.

But regardless of what combination of identification they use, they do have to establish their citizenship. Why? Well, because that is the law. There are very good reasons why we have those laws in place to make sure that, when someone starts a job, they are either a U.S. citizen or they have a visa with some type of work authorization in it.

So it makes zero sense, for something as significant and important to the very foundations of our constitutional Republic as the right to vote, that we could just so lightly cast aside the need to verify citizenship when we go out of our way in other contexts, like starting a new job, to make sure that they prove it.

So, sure. My friend and colleague points out, when people fill out that driver's license application, they do have to check that box, and they do have to sign their name, but why make it so that someone could lie, especially when read against the backdrop of the Supreme Court ruling 12 years ago, concluding—wrongly, in my view but concluding nonetheless, and that decision is on the books—that not only do they not have to prove citizenship, but no State official, when receiving the driver license application form, may even inquire, even if they have reasons to doubt that the person has committed something or otherwise—they can't ask, even if there has been a wave in that State or in that area or across the country of noncitizens registering to vote and that State wants to make a decision—you know, we really ought to provide some degree of documentation—they are not allowed to do any of that.

So this is filling that gap, and it is important to do that.

To that end, Madam President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 22, the SAVE Act, which is at the desk. I further ask unanimous consent 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 California.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I reserve the right to object not for the first time on this proposed SAVE Act, not even for the second time on this proposed SAVE Act.

This is an item that my colleague has brought up repeatedly here before the Senate. So I won't repeat the arguments and explanations that I have made in prior objections to the SAVE Act but to suggest it is a solution in search of a problem. Audit after audit, review after review, investigation after investigation has demonstrated that the instances of ineligible immigrants voting in elections is exceedingly, exceedingly, exceedingly rare, which, again, means that our current laws are working.

And to suggest that birth certificates be required for a certain task when it is already secure—we could have—I would be walking around with my birth certificate in my pocket.

A passport is another acceptable form of documentation for citizenship. Half the American public doesn't have a current, valid passport because not everybody travels abroad on a regular basis. So they are unnecessary. Our current laws are working, and, therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, with great respect to my friend and col-

league the distinguished senior Senator from California, he has suggested that the SAVE Act, which merely requires some type of proof of citizenship when someone registers to vote in U.S. elections—that the SAVE Act itself is a solution in search of a problem.

My friend also suggests that no documentary proof of citizenship is or should be made necessary, even considering the Supreme Court's ruling that States are not even allowed to request such documentation where they may deem it necessary. He suggests that this is the case because, as he puts it, the occurrence of noncitizens voting in U.S. elections is not only rare, but it is exceedingly, exceedingly, exceedingly rare, as he puts it.

I don't know exactly what that means, but I do know that, taken to its logical conclusion, that same logical leap could and would lead us to all kinds of outcomes that we would never dream of. There are all sorts of things that may be rare by some standard or another. Sure, it is true that most of the people voting in U.S. elections are not noncitizens. In fact, I would say that they would be a small, small, small minority of those casting votes because most people here in the United States, most people voting in U.S. elections, are, in fact, U.S. citizens.

But taken to its logical conclusion, that would suggest that there is no need for TSA, which, actually, I would be fine with for all sorts of reasons. But taken to its logical conclusion, it would suggest there is no need for you to identify yourself when you go through TSA because instances of terrorism are exceedingly rare or instances of people boarding an airplane in somebody else's name are exceedingly rare. Sure, that happens.

Taken to its logical conclusion, it would also suggest that because instances of people starting a job, beginning employment in the United States as an American citizen or as a noncitizen pretending to be an American citizen, are exceedingly, exceedingly, exceedingly rare, as he puts it, therefore we should require no documentary evidence of either U.S. citizenship on one hand or work eligibility with a visa on the other hand.

I could go on and on. But it is not an answer to the need for the SAVE Act, to the demand that 80-plus percent of the American people agree with, which is noncitizens shouldn't vote in U.S. elections. It is not an answer to that demand, to that widely held bipartisan supermajority view, not an answer to that to suggest that because noncitizen voting is rare, we need not require any proof of citizenship ever.

Why? Well, there are so many reasons why, but here is the simplest one. When we make that easy, more people would do it. Some elections are decided by large margins; others are decided by, to use his words, exceedingly, exceedingly, exceedingly small margins.

We would be doing ourselves and the American people and the American Re-

public and the U.S. Constitution a grave, grave disservice if we didn't take that risk very seriously.

Foreign election interference and meddling in our system is a real threat. We need to take it seriously. It is tragic and unfortunate.

In fact, it is shameful that we haven't passed the SAVE Act. This is not the end of this issue. I will be back. We will get this passed. But between now and whenever we do get it passed, the American people are taking on a risk because of this body's unwillingness to act.

And it is not this body. Let's face it. It is Members of this body on one side of the aisle, and not on the other, who are willing to incur this risk.

That, tragically, is a sacrifice they are willing to make. We, tragically, are a sacrifice they are willing to make. Let's not let them continue to make it. Let's pass the SAVE Act.

(Mr. MORENO assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARSHALL). The Senator from Vermont.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 224

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, all of us are extremely concerned—and I mean all of us: Senator RISCH and all the Republican colleagues and me and all of the Democratic colleagues—about the suffering and famine that are upon the folks in Gaza.

Today, I am here to offer a resolution for consideration on which 46 Senators on our side agree. Although we have not had signatories on the Republican side, I know that my colleagues on the Republican side are very concerned about the devastating absence of food, medicine, and baby formula for 2 million Palestinians who are living in Gaza.

It has been 74 days since aid trucks were allowed to transit into Gaza. That is a decision that the Israeli Government has made under Prime Minister Netanyahu. What does alarm me is that it is very clear under international law and it is very clear on prior actions that this U.S. Senate has taken that in a conflict, as a tactic of war, starving a civilian population is illegal, impermissible, and just wrong, absolutely wrong.

As an indication of the suffering, this is one young child who died in her parents' arms, Janan Al-Saqafi. That was due to no food, no baby formula to feed this young person.

The U.N. has released a report that indicates that if food is not brought into Gaza within the next 48 hours, 14,000 more infants will die, and they will die in the arms of their mother or father.

So this question of should aid get in—obviously it should. It is not right for aid to be withheld as an instrument of war. Regrettably, that appears to have been a decision that has been made by the Israeli Government. It is not right, it is not necessary, it is not helpful, and it is extraordinarily harmful to innocent children and to innocent mothers.

My hope is that this Senate would pass a resolution making very clear our concern about the well-being of innocent Palestinians in Gaza. The food those Palestinians in Gaza need is right on the other side of the border. It is there. All it needs is to be transported from where it is into Gaza and then distributed.

I want to just quote a Palestinian about how dire that situation is. In the words of a Palestinian:

Believe it or not—

This is, by the way, at a moment when bombs are still dropping, where people who have been relocated a dozen times are having to relocate again, where the two remaining hospitals in Khan Younis have been bombed, where there is no security whatsoever.

This is what a Palestinian said that sums it up:

Believe it or not, people no longer care about bombs, rockets, or even death. What consumes them now is food. How to find it. How to feed their children. It is impossible to describe how hard life has become. People walk around in a daze, dizzy from malnutrition and despair. People are confused, anxious, and exhausted. They are literally dying of hunger. At this point, they would accept anything just to survive. People are fainting in the streets. They look like skin and bones, pale and dizzy. If you saw them, you would break down and cry.

Those are the words of a Palestinian in Gaza.

Mr. President, we have to feed those people. The food is there. We all want those innocent people to survive and avoid famine. Let us do every single thing we can to persuade the Israeli Netanyahu Government to get that food in to people who desperately need it.

At this point, I yield to my colleague Senator VAN HOLLEN from Maryland.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, first, I want to thank my friend and colleague the Senator from Vermont Mr. WELCH for offering this resolution.

I just want to focus on the resolution itself for a moment because you would think this is something we could all agree on.

I am just reading the resolved clause here:

Resolved, That the Senate—(1) is gravely concerned with—(A) the humanitarian crisis and acute suffering of the Palestinian civilians in Gaza; and (B) the suffering of the hostages and hostage families.

That is section 1 of the resolved clause.

Senator WELCH has said and I think we all acknowledge the terrible humanitarian disaster that Palestinian civilians are suffering under right now. Trump just acknowledged it the other day. He said that a lot of people are starving.

Cindy McCain said:

Families in Gaza are starving while the food they need is sitting at the border.

Fifty-seven children have already died from malnutrition, and the reports are that 14,000 Palestinian chil-

dren in Gaza are at imminent risk of death if they don't get more food.

Just yesterday, after 78 days of a total siege and blockade on any food coming into Gaza, a trickle of food began to get in, primarily because European countries began to say very loudly that what was happening was unacceptable, that it was a violation of international law.

We are also hearing from the hostage families the urgency of putting an end to this conflict and resolving this to make sure their loved ones can come home.

I was very glad to see Steve Witkoff be able to bring home Edan Alexander. Now we have to bring back the rest of the hostages.

The hostage families overwhelmingly have been calling on Prime Minister Netanyahu and his government to end the conflict, end the suffering on all sides, and bring their loved ones home.

I want to just read the second part of this resolution because it does what I understand so many of the hostages' families have been saying we should do.

[C]alls on the White House, Department of State, and other relevant United States Government agencies to urgently use all available diplomatic tools to bring about the release of the hostages, an immediate cessation of the blockade on food and humanitarian aid for Palestinian civilians, and a durable end to the conflict in Gaza.

Those are part 1 and part 2 of the resolved clause that I just read.

I want to thank Senator WELCH because he has written this in a way that you would think not a single Senator would object to the words in this resolution. So I do urge my colleagues to support it.

Let's put an end to the suffering and starvation of Palestinian civilians in Gaza. Let's get the hostages home. Let's work to end this conflict in a way that ensures no more October 7ths and ensures security and dignity for both Israelis and Palestinians alike.

I yield back to the Senator from Vermont.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH. Thank you again, the Senator from Maryland.

Mr. President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 224; further, that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, look, first of all, we have no disagreement with the suffering that is going on in Gaza. The problem we have here is, as we heard from both of these speakers, not one word was said as to whose fault this is. This is the fault of a group of people,

and that group of people is Hamas. I heard them mention Israel several times. This is not Israel's fault. I heard them mention us, the United States. This is not our fault.

I couldn't agree more with Senator WELCH when he talks about the fact that we want an immediate cease-fire and for people to be fed there and things to get better there. It is so simple. It is so easy. It is totally in the hands of Hamas. If they release the hostages, they lay down their arms, and they surrender, not one more bullet will be fired, and there will be scads of trucks coming into Gaza. That is how this ends.

But can we end it? No. If we send trucks in—the Senator knows. The Senator has seen the intelligence on some of this. When we send food and trucks in there, who eats? The soldiers eat. The Hamas soldiers eat. They starve the women, and they starve the children.

Not only do they starve them; they use them as human shields. And they set up their facilities—their military facilities—in hospitals, in schools, in mosques, in all kinds of places that they then wring their hands and say: Oh, my gosh, we have been attacked.

Look, this is despicable. This is horrible. This is criminal. It is beyond human understanding how human beings could treat other human beings the same way, especially when you are related to them, as they are in Palestine.

So I agree that this needs to stop, but the first thing that needs to be said is that this is the fault of Hamas, and it is not our fault. And it doesn't matter if we roll trucks in there tomorrow. That food would be taken. It would be stolen. It would be distributed by Hamas to their fighting soldiers, and the dying and the suffering of the women and children would continue.

This thing is badly aimed. It does not, in any way, lay the fault where it belongs, and that is at the feet of Hamas. So based on all that—I share your objective—this gets us nowhere. And worse than that, it doesn't point out where the problem is.

Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. LUMMIS). Objection is heard.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH. Madam President, I want the Senator from Idaho, the esteemed chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, to know that when it comes to condemning Hamas for what it did on October 7, for what it has done to the Palestinians in Gaza on an ongoing basis, I join you in condemning Hamas.

And this resolution does not get into the question of fault. It gets into the question of suffering. It gets into the question of the suffering of innocent people who, at times, have been victimized by Hamas but whose families are hungry, who are starving. And the point of this resolution is to say: Let's help them avoid starvation by supporting the delivery of the food and the

medicine and the baby formula that they need.

This, in no way, is going to solve the conflict. That is a point the Senator made, and he has got a point to be made. But if we do all we can to facilitate the delivery of aid, it means that we are doing all we can to ease the suffering of innocent families who have been victimized.

My view is that we should do all we can to alleviate the suffering, especially for these infants, these children, these women, and peace-loving Palestinians who want nothing more than to live in peace in their neighborhood.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Madam President, I want to respond to that.

First of all, I commend the Senator for his appreciation for the suffering that is going on. It is horrible. It is despicable. You have seen the photos. You have seen the video. It is a horrible, horrible situation.

One of the difficulties I have with this is that he is correct; this resolution does not assign fault, nor does it talk about fault. And that is one of the biggest problems I have with this. If this is going to be resolved, fault must be identified. The conditions on the ground have to be identified. And how this is going to be resolved has to be identified, none of which is considered in here. It is simply a suggestion that simply taking food there is going to resolve this problem, and we have done that. We have food there. It is ready to go in.

As I said, three things need to happen, and it is in the hands solely of Hamas—not in Israel, not in Netanyahu, not in our President, not in the people of the United States' hands. It is in the hands of Hamas. And that is, if they simply release the hostages, lay down their arms and surrender, it is over. The food flows in. There is not another bullet fired. That is all that has to happen. But what has to be recognized in this is how this is going to end. There is only one way this can end, and that is with complete and total destruction of Hamas.

This is very similar to what the United States of America and its allies did in the late 1930s. We decided that the Nazis were so bad that they could not exist as a military force, as a political force, or as a cultural force, and we decided they needed to be eliminated.

That is what Israel decided it has to do to protect itself. That is what it is doing.

But Hamas can stop this. They can stop it in a minute, and they are not showing any signs of that. So what is going to happen is this fight is going to go on until the last Hamas falls.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

NO TAX ON TIPS ACT

Ms. ROSEN. Madam President, hard-working families in Nevada and all

across this country are struggling to make ends meet because of rising costs on everything, from groceries to housing, all of which has been made worse by Donald Trump's tariffs that are driving prices even higher.

Nevadans, our families, we are being squeezed, and they need real relief. They need us to work together to lower costs for them. That is why I introduced the No Tax on Tips Act alongside Senator TED CRUZ from Texas, which would eliminate Federal income taxes on tipped wages.

For so many service and hospitality workers, tips aren't extra; it is part of their income that they use to make ends meet. Tips are how Nevadans pay their rent, cover their groceries, take care of their families, their kids.

And Nevada has more tipped workers per capita than any other State. So this bill would mean immediate financial relief for countless hard-working families.

No tax on tips was one of President Trump's key promises to the American people, which he unveiled in my State of Nevada. And I am not afraid to embrace a good idea wherever it comes from. So I agreed we need to get this done.

This is not a time for politics. It is a time for progress for hard-working Americans. This bipartisan bill is a good idea that has support from Democrats and Republicans. So we should pass it as soon as possible without any poison pills.

The problem is that the House Republicans have included a version of the No Tax on Tips Act in their bigger budget bill—a bill that cuts Medicaid, SNAP, and other programs families rely on, to give more tax breaks for billionaires and the ultrawealthy.

So we shouldn't be forcing working families to choose between keeping their healthcare or keeping their tips, which is why we want this bipartisan bill to pass on its own—on its own—not part of a harmful, extreme budget bill.

If we are serious about providing service employees with financial relief, let's do it now. Let's do it today because the American people, they get sick and tired of Washington games.

So let's pass this bill without playing politics, without taking away healthcare and food assistance from families who need it the most. Let's pass it by itself.

That is why I am calling on the Senate to pass the bipartisan No Tax on Tips Act right here, right now, as a stand-alone bill. We are going to cut taxes for real hard-working Americans, for Nevadans, for everyone, not just for billionaires. We are going to cut taxes on service workers' tips without cutting Medicaid or SNAP. And let's get this done with strong guardrails so CEOs and the ultrawealthy don't exploit loopholes meant to help working people. Let's pass it today.

Nevadans sent me here to fight for them, and so I am going to keep working to lower costs, to raise wages, and

to make sure people who power our economy—our working families—can keep more of what they earn. And through this bipartisan bill, it shows that I am not going to allow Washington gridlock and partisanship to block a bill without a fight. That is why we are going to pass it today, taking matters into my own hands, with the support of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, to pass our bipartisan No Tax on Tips Act by unanimous consent.

And so, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be discharged from further consideration of S. 129 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 129) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to eliminate the application of the income tax on qualified tips through a deduction allowed to all individual taxpayers, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. ROSEN. Madam President, I further ask 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 129) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 129

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “No Tax on Tips Act”.

SEC. 2. DEDUCTION FOR QUALIFIED TIPS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) DEDUCTION ALLOWED.—Part VII of subchapter B of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by redesignating section 224 as section 225 and by inserting after section 223 the following new section:

“SEC. 224. QUALIFIED TIPS.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—There shall be allowed as a deduction an amount equal to the qualified tips received during the taxable year that are included on statements furnished to the employer pursuant to section 6053(a).

“(b) MAXIMUM DEDUCTION.—The deduction allowed by subsection (a) for any taxpayer for the taxable year shall not exceed \$25,000.

“(c) QUALIFIED TIPS.—For purposes of this section—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘qualified tip’ means any cash tip received by an individual in the course of such individual's employment in an occupation which traditionally and customarily received tips on or before December 31, 2023, as provided by the Secretary.

“(2) EXCLUSION FOR CERTAIN EMPLOYEES.—Such term shall not include any amount received by an individual in the course of employment by an employer if such individual had, for the preceding taxable year, compensation (within the meaning of section