

being cooperative in terms of their nuclear negotiations with the P5+1. What the President didn't mention is that this very regime that is spreading terror, unlike at any time in recent memory, is involved in the toppling of four Arab capitals. They are wreaking havoc on the neighborhood. As we are negotiating on their nuclear deal, they are still the largest state sponsor of terrorism. They called for death to America 2 days ago.

So I say to the Obama administration: Wake up and change your policies before you set the whole world on fire. Please watch your language because our best ally in the region, the State of Israel, does not deserve the label of "occupier," given the facts on the ground, and they do not deserve to hear from the Chief of Staff of the President of the United States language that is usually reserved for a terrorist organization.

So when I thought it couldn't get any worse, it has. Let me put the Obama administration on notice. You may not like the fact that Prime Minister Netanyahu won, but he did, and here is what you need to understand. If you are recalculating the administration's support for Israel in terms of how you handle resolutions in the United Nations, you need to understand that Congress will recalculate how we relate to the United Nations if you stand on the sidelines and let the U.N. take over the peace process.

There will be a bipartisan, violent backlash in this body if the Obama administration does not veto a U.N. resolution defining the peace process in the Security Council, avoiding direct negotiations between the parties. I am here to say that one of the casualties of a haphazard foreign policy could be the relationship between the United Nations and the Congress. I promise there is bipartisan support in this body for two things: to stand firmly with Israel and not to allow the U.N. Security Council to take over the peace process in defining the terms of a deal.

Secondly, if there is a deal with the Iranians over their nuclear program, if this administration takes that deal to the U.N. Security Council, bypassing Congress and not coming to us first, there will become a great backlash regarding that move.

So I say to the Obama administration: Israel is not the problem. The Israeli people have not killed one American soldier. The Israeli people are in a dispute about their survival with the Palestinian people. The Israeli people gave land to the Palestinians, and in return they got 10,000 rockets, and you want them to do it again. Can't you understand why Israel may not want to withdraw from the West Bank given the history of Gaza? If you can't, you are completely blind to the world as it is, and your hatred and your disgust and your disdain for the Prime Minister has clouded your judgment.

So to our friends in Israel I say: There can only be one Commander in

Chief, and that is the way it should be. But there are 535 of us in the House and the Senate and we do have your back. We will not sit on the sidelines and watch this rhetoric enacted in a manner that would put you at risk beyond what you already are in terms of risk.

This is a low point for me; that an administration, the Chief of Staff of an American President, would use this language, but it fits into an overall pattern that I think is very destructive. So I say to President Obama and Mr. McDonough: Your foreign policy is not working. If you don't get that, then God help us all because what you are doing in the Mideast is not working. You are making everything worse, and now you have added fuel to the fire.

I hope there will be some self-correction at the White House; that we will not take this rhetoric any further than we have today; that there will be a re-evaluation of whether it is appropriate to call the Israeli people occupiers, given the facts on the ground. Only time will tell.

I do understand this, without any hesitation. There are many of us in this body who will not put up with this. We will push back. Israel has not killed one U.S. soldier. Israel hasn't toppled any of their neighbors. Israel doesn't chant "Death to America." You may not like the outcome of the Israeli election, but it was up to the Israeli people to decide, and they have decided.

All of us got into this body the same way—people at home voted for us. Under our Constitution, we have an equal voice to that of the President in terms of checks and balances. Even though he is the leader of America's foreign policy and the Commander in Chief, we do have the right to speak on such matters. So here is my voice, and I think I speak for many on both sides of the aisle when I say to the Israeli people: Do what you have to do to defend the Jewish State. To the President of the United States and Mr. McDonough: The language you used today is very unhelpful and, quite frankly, disconnected from reality.

I will end with this. Would any Member of this body, if they were in Israeli leadership, withdraw from the West Bank, given what is going on in the region? Would any Member of this body be as restrained in responding to a rocket attack coming from a neighbor as Israel has been restrained? What would we do if some terrorist organization next door to us launched a rocket trying to kill our children? Would we be as restrained as our Israeli friends? I doubt it.

I am asking this body to walk a mile in the shoes of the Israeli people and understand why this statement is so offensive and has usually been reserved by the leader of the free world to describe terrorist organizations.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

(The remarks of Mrs. ERNST pertaining to the introduction of S. 841 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR ERNST

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I congratulate the new Senator from Iowa, not only for her service in America's military for all of these years, but also for her service now in the Senate. She is obviously bringing to the Senate real expertise about the needs she addressed in her first piece of legislation. I expect it will enjoy broad bipartisan support, particularly with the sponsor having such firsthand knowledge of the needs of these returning veterans.

So on behalf of all Members of the Senate, I congratulate the Senator from Iowa for her new bill and for her first remarks.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Loretta Lynch, the nominee to be our next Attorney General, has now been awaiting a vote on the Senate floor for 25 days. I have spoken many times about her historic nomination, her inspiring family, and her passion for the highest callings of public service.

Last week, a distinguished group of bipartisan law enforcement officials came together to call for the confirmation of Loretta Lynch. These individuals have dedicated the better part of their careers to protecting the American people, and they conveyed how important it is to have the Senate confirm the chief law enforcement officer in the country.

One of those individuals is my friend, Louis Freeh, former Director of the FBI and a Federal judge. Director Freeh wrote to the committee in support of Loretta Lynch that "[i]n my twenty-five years of public service—23 in the Department of Justice—I cannot think of a more qualified nominee to be America's chief law enforcement officer." He has further stated that "Ms. Lynch is an atypically non-political appointment for that office, a career professional without any political party ties or activity."

Loretta Lynch is also supported by the current New York police commissioner, who was appointed by a Democrat, and a former New York police commissioner, who was appointed by a Republican. She has earned the support of former U.S. attorneys from both Republican and Democratic administrations. She has the support of the Major

Cities Chiefs Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major County Sheriffs' Association, and many, many others.

There is a very obvious reason for the bipartisan support Ms. Lynch has received—her qualifications are simply beyond reproach. She has been confirmed by the Senate twice before to serve as the top Federal prosecutor based in Brooklyn, NY. Those who have worked with her over the course of her 30-year career described her as “even-handed,” “apolitical,” and believe she “will be a strong independent voice at the helm of the Department of Justice.”

Under her leadership, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York has brought terrorists to justice, obtained convictions against both Republicans and Democrats in public corruption cases, and fought tirelessly against violent crime and financial fraud. Her record shows that as Attorney General, Ms. Lynch will effectively, fairly, and independently enforce the law.

Many Americans are starting to wonder why she is being held up so long in light of her sterling record and in light of the very serious law enforcement challenges that we face in communities across the country. Unfortunately, the Republican Senate leadership is holding Ms. Lynch's nomination hostage to their political agenda and that does not reflect well on the Senate or their leadership.

President Obama announced the nomination of Ms. Lynch more than 4 months ago. The Judiciary Committee reported her nomination with bipartisan support 25 days ago. As of today, her nomination has been pending on the Senate floor longer than all of the past seven Attorneys General combined: Richard Thornburgh, 1 day; Bob Barr, 5 days; Janet Reno, 1 day; John Ashcroft, 2 days; Alberto Gonzales, 8 days; Michael Mukasey, 2 days; and Eric Holder, 5 days. This delay is an embarrassment for the Senate.

The excuses for holding up her nomination continue to mount and each excuse rings hollow given the importance of the position to which she is nominated.

First, the President and Senate Democrats were warned last November that we should not move Ms. Lynch's nomination during the lame-duck period last Congress. Senate Republicans claimed that she would be treated fairly if we waited. In fact, the current majority leader issued a statement last November, proclaiming that “Ms. Lynch will receive fair consideration by the Senate. And her nomination should be considered in the new Congress through regular order.” As a result, we acceded to their request. However, treatment of her nomination has not been fair when compared to her predecessors.

Despite Senate Republicans' request that we not move her nomination in the few weeks remaining in the lame-

duck session, they now assert in the press that if this nomination was so important, then the President and Senate Democrats should have processed it during that very time of transition. Sometimes you can only shake your head at what is said to excuse their delay. This nomination is for the top law enforcement officer in the Nation. It should not just be important to Democrats. It should be important to Republicans as well. It is important to all Americans.

I can remember when Judge Mukasey was nominated by President Bush to be Attorney General. From the date of announcement to confirmation, it took 53 days. Judge Mukasey received a floor vote just 2 days after he was reported from committee. And these were some of the remarks made by Senate Republicans at that time: “We should stop playing partisan political games with this nomination. The Justice Department is too important for this type of stuff.” “Forty days into the partisan wilderness is more than enough. We should confirm Judge Michael Mukasey without further delay.” There were expressions of outrage against Democrats after just 40 days. Contrast that to Ms. Lynch, who has now been waiting 135 days. Her nomination has been pending on the floor for 25 days whereas Judge Mukasey received a vote in 2 days. Where is the outrage from my fellow Senators on the other side of the aisle now?

Second, the majority leader announced 2 weeks ago that he would finally schedule a vote on Ms. Lynch's nomination last week. However, instead of doing so, the majority leader changed his mind and acted as if the Senate could not consider legislation and executive nominees at the same time. Now he has announced that she will not have a confirmation vote until after the Senate has concluded its debate on the human trafficking bill. The Senate often debates legislation and votes on nominations at the same time. Over the last week and a half, we voted on six other executive nominations while we were on the human trafficking bill. None of those executive nominations is more important than this one. The top law enforcement officer in the land is not a negotiating chip that any party should use for leverage. That is not how we respect the role that law enforcement officials play in our system of government.

What made the delay announced last Sunday more confounding is the fact that Loretta Lynch has a proven track record of prosecuting human trafficking and child rape crimes. Over the course of the last decade, her office has indicted over 55 defendants in sex trafficking cases and rescued over 110 victims of sex trafficking.

Ms. Lynch and her office have used the tools that Congress has provided them to bring traffickers to justice. In *United States v. Rivera*, the prosecutors in her office utilized the Trafficking Victims Protection Act to help

them obtain a conviction against an owner of several New York bars for his role in a sex trafficking and forced labor ring. The evidence at trial established that the defendants recruited and harbored scores of undocumented Latin American immigrants, and forced them to work as waitresses at the owner's bars. The owner and his accomplices used violence, including rapes and beatings, as well as fraud and threats of deportation, to compel the victims to work and prevent them from reporting the illegal activity to police. Because of the leadership Ms. Lynch showed in making such cases a priority, the bar owner was sentenced to 60 years in prison.

I am proud of the Senate's work to get the Trafficking Victims Protection Act reauthorized 2 years ago as part of the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. We passed those laws with strong bipartisan support because we avoided unnecessary political fights, listened to the survivors, and responded to what they said they needed. I wish the Republican leadership would do the same on Senator CORNYN's trafficking bill. Unfortunately, it is many of the same Senators who voted against the reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and the Violence Against Women Act who have injected a divisive partisan fight here—over the objection of the very survivors they wish to help. It is this unnecessary fight that has stopped an otherwise bipartisan bill. And now, many of those same Senators are using this unnecessary conflict—a conflict they created—as an excuse not to move Loretta Lynch's nomination. So instead of working together to confirm a nominee with a proven commitment to stopping human trafficking, and instead of passing antitrafficking legislation that will help the survivors of this terrible crime, Senate Republicans have refused to do either one this month.

Loretta Lynch was recently named one of “New York's New Abolitionists” by the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition for her leadership in combating human trafficking. She has told members of the Judiciary Committee that human trafficking would be one of her top priorities if confirmed as Attorney General. And now, in the name of supporting human trafficking victims, Senate Republicans are blocking her nomination. That makes no sense. If we want to show our commitment to ending human trafficking, we should remove the unnecessary, partisan language from the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act—language that is not in the House-passed bill—and confirm Loretta Lynch without further delay.

It is time to stop delaying and making excuses. It is time to stop playing politics with our law enforcement and national security. There is only one holdup to Ms. Lynch's nomination to be Attorney General, and that is the party that the American public has entrusted to govern the Senate. I ask

that she receive a confirmation vote this week so that she can get to the peoples' work as our next Attorney General of the United States.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING JOHN DONATO

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate John Donato of Smithfield, ME, for his achievements in coaching over the past 45 years. His hard work for girls' basketball teams across the State led to an impressive 500th win this past December, placing him in an exclusive club of extraordinary coaches. The season finished on a high note for his Lawrence High School team with a State championship win, marking his fifth State championship title over the course of his career.

Mr. Donato's coaching record is stunning. While he passed the 500 mark for basketball wins in December and now has 514, he has a grand total of 1,247 wins across all sports. His longest winning streak with a basketball team was an incredible 88 games. Mr. Donato has a long history of excellence in sports, from playing at the Boston Garden in semifinals games as a shooting guard in high school to bringing teams to wins as a coach at Houlton, Messalonskee, Mount View, Hall-Dale, and Lawrence High Schools. After attending Ricker College, Mr. Donato spent an impressive 18 years coaching basketball and 25 years coaching baseball at Houlton alone.

While he was coach, the Houlton girls' basketball team won nine Eastern Maine Class B titles in 11 years and four State championships in 6 years. They had 261 wins overall. On top of that, his baseball team won two Eastern Maine titles, with 324 wins overall, and the golf team won two State championships. Mr. Donato then moved to central Maine, and after a year coaching at Hall-Dale High School, he began coaching at Messalonskee High School. There his team went 17-1 during his first season, a major turnaround from their 5-13 run the previous year. He would spend 8 years at Messalonskee, followed by 4 years at Mount View High School, and then began coaching girls' basketball at Lawrence in 2010. The girls' State championship victory this year marks Lawrence's first in 21 years.

I am not the first to recognize Mr. Donato's great achievements. He was the McDonald's All-Star Coach of the Year 12 times, Eastern Maine Class B Coach of the Year 8 times, Kennebec Valley Athletic Conference Coach of the Year 4 times, and State of Maine Girls' Basketball Coach of the Year 5 times.

Mr. Donato is not only a coach, but also a teacher and former business owner, now in his 14th year teaching science at Lawrence High School. In each respect, he has proven a strong

commitment to his community. Whether in the gym or the classroom, Mr. Donato brings knowledge of leadership and team building that is invaluable for our students. I am proud to represent people such as Coach Donato, an outstanding citizen of Maine, in the U.S. Senate. On the occasion of his 500th win and fifth State championship title, I extend my congratulations to him and the teams he has coached over the years.●

KENNEBUNK ROTARY CLUB 90TH ANNIVERSARY

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, I wish to honor the many years of service provided by the Kennebunk Rotary Club, which is now entering its 90th year as an integral part of the Kennebunk community. The Kennebunk Rotary Club is an organization founded on a steadfast dedication to "Service Above Self", a motto that I believe we should all strive to fulfill.

I have had the privilege of speaking with rotary members on multiple occasions and I value their insight as important members of their local communities. I have also attended a number of rotary club meetings in Maine and as the son of a rotarian I have seen firsthand the positive impact that Rotary International has on communities in Maine and across the country.

For generations, local students, families, seniors, and people around the world have benefited from the Kennebunk Rotary Club and the many charitable events that it hosts annually. Indeed, some of these events have been a source of Kennebunk pride for years. These include cyber-crime awareness trainings for seniors, a 5K every summer, and a Christmas party to provide gifts for children who otherwise wouldn't have any under the tree.

In addition to these community events, the Kennebunk Rotary Club sponsors philanthropic programs such as the club's annual scholarship fund, which provides several local high school seniors with up to a \$1,500 to cover some college expenses. Scholarship programs such as the Kennebunk Rotary Club's open the door to success for Kennebunk graduates. The first recipient of this scholarship, Thomas Putnam, demonstrates the success of the program. Several years after he received his scholarship funds, he joined the Kennebunk Rotary Club and is today the director of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Massachusetts.

Finally, the Kennebunk Rotary Club has been able to extend their love of community beyond the bounds of their scenic hometown, crossing international borders to help those in need. After a train carrying crude oil exploded in the small town of Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, the Kennebunk Rotary Club and the rest of Rotary International District 7780 sprang into action. They helped raise over \$25,000 in donations, which was used to provide

400 children with Christmas presents. It was my pleasure to work with Rotary International and U.S. Customs to ensure that those gifts arrived safely in Lac-Mégantic. Through collaboration and a little hard work, the Kennebunk Rotary Club was able to make a huge impact on the lives of many.

I would like to again thank the Kennebunk Rotary Club, and congratulate them on their 90 years of dedication to "Service Above Self." Their investment in Kennebunk, the great State of Maine, and communities across the globe has had a great effect on students, families, and seniors and will continue to open the doors of opportunity for years to come.●

RECOGNIZING RxIMPACT DAY

• Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I recognize the seventh annual RxIMPACT Day on Capitol Hill. This is a special day where we recognize pharmacies' contribution to the American healthcare system. This year's event organized by the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, takes place on March 25-26. Nearly 400 individuals from the pharmacy community—including practicing pharmacists, pharmacy school faculty and students, State pharmacy leaders and pharmacy company executives—will visit Capitol Hill. They will share their views with Congress about the importance of supporting legislation that protects access to community and neighborhood pharmacies and that utilizes pharmacists to improve the quality and reduce the costs of providing health care.

Advocates from 45 States have traveled to Washington to talk about the pharmacy community's contributions in over 40,000 community pharmacies nationwide. These important health care providers are here to educate Congress about the value of pharmacists and protect access to the essential services they provide as part of our health care delivery system. And just as these providers traveled to meet with us, Members of Congress and their staff have toured retail chain pharmacies in our own communities more than 325 times since 2009.

As cochair of the Senate Community Pharmacy Caucus, I recognize that the local pharmacist is a trusted, highly accessible health care provider deeply committed to providing the highest quality care in the most efficient manner possible. Patients have always relied on their local pharmacist to meet their health care needs.

As demand for health care services continues to grow, pharmacists have expanded their role in health care delivery, partnering with physicians, nurses and other health care providers to meet their patients' needs. Innovative services provided by pharmacists do even more to improve patient health care. Pharmacists are highly valued by those that rely on them most—those in rural and underserved areas, as well as