

have introduced it already, but we are going to recalibrate it, particularly with regard to the lessons learned from Ukraine.

One of those lessons that we learned from the brutal Ukrainian invasion by the Russian dictator Vladimir Putin in Ukraine is that comprehensive economic and financial sanctions have the best chance of deterring a conflict when they are clearly articulated and ready to go before the conflict begins. That wasn't the case in Ukraine, and we will never know, had sanctions already been teed up and ready to go, if they could have deterred that conflict.

With the STAND with Taiwan Act, which stands for Sanctions Targeting Aggressors of Neighboring Democracies—STAND—the whole point of this would be to deter Xi Jinping from making the decision. That third layer of deterrence is saying: OK. If you militarily invade Taiwan, here are the massive sanctions that we and our allies are going to hit you with, and they will be devastating.

This bill makes it clear that we should be engaging with Taiwan economically, across the board, in many sectors. And this is where I have deep concern—and I believe many of my colleagues here in the U.S. Senate have deep concerns—about the direction that might be happening with regard to the Biden administration.

Now, look, I am somebody who, you know, will be critical of the Biden administration when I think they are not doing a good job on certain things. And I do that a lot, particularly on a topic I am going to talk about here in a minute, energy. But in other areas, particularly as it relates to the Biden administration's relationship with regard to our allies and Taiwan, I have been supportive of a number of their initiatives vocally because I think they have strengthened American interests in the INDOPACOM theater. What are those?

Well, for example, the Biden administration took this initiative from the Trump administration—it actually started in the Bush administration—called the Quad. That is the biggest democracies in the INDOPACOM theater: us, Japan, Australia, and India. They have taken that grouping, which, during the Trump administration, was reinvigorated, particularly by Secretary Pompeo, at the minister level, and the Biden administration has taken that to the leader level. The President of the United States meets with the leaders of Japan, Australia, and India on a regular basis. That is good. That is smart policy.

They have also launched another very innovative policy, the Australia-UK-U.S. agreement to work together on military and defense issues: submarines, nuclear subs, AI, quantum computing. It is called the Arcus initiative. I think it is a really innovative initiative, and I have been very—one of the most vocal supporters of it in the U.S. Senate.

The Biden administration has also been pressing the G-7 to do more as it relates to Taiwan—the first time ever in the G-7. That is a good initiative.

In a lot of these areas, I have been supportive. So what am I concerned about?

This is a concern I have, but it should be a concern that every Senator has. The administration is getting ready to announce what they are calling the Indo-Pacific economic framework. This is going to focus on more economic engagement with our allies in other countries in the INDOPACOM theater. OK. I support that in general. We will see what the details are. But right now, that initiative, which we need in terms of an initiative with regard to economics and other elements of connectivity with our allies in the region, appears to be on the verge of missing two critical factors.

No. 1, and the real purpose of what I wanted to talk about, right now, we are hearing from administration officials that the Indo-Pacific economic framework is going to exclude Taiwan. Whoa. Whoa. That would not be a good thing, and I don't think many U.S. Senators—Democrats or Republicans—would agree that the Biden administration's first big economic initiative is going to exclude Taiwan, a very important economic player, very important technical player in terms of chip fabrication. Why would they do that? Well, it is not clear.

I have been pressing a number of Biden administration officials saying, you can't make that move. A, the Senate is not going to like it. And we have had a lot to say about U.S. relations with Taiwan for decades. And, B, it just doesn't make sense.

Some of the things I have heard is, well, there is this argument that trade is really not national security, so it doesn't relate to Taiwan. Well, that is not correct. Trade and economic issues are clearly national security issues as it relates to our country, as it relates to our allies.

The other thing I have heard is that, well, some of the other countries in the Indo-Pacific framework don't really want Taiwan in it. Again, we are the United States. We are the leader in that part of the world. If another country is saying, hey, I don't want Taiwan in it, you know, I think we need to politely tell them that, too bad. They are going to be.

So I am primarily giving these remarks right now to let all of my Senate colleagues, many of whom—Democrats and Republicans—I know care about this issue.

I have been trying to raise the alarm with the administration, saying, bad idea if your big, first economic initiative for the INDOPACOM theater is not going to include Taiwan. I hope other colleagues of mine will do the same.

Let me give you one final area that this administration should be focused on as it relates to our partners in the region, and that is energy—that is en-

ergy. We have so many opportunities to do more with our allies—of course, in Europe but also in Asia—as it relates to energy.

I put forward legislation called the Quad energy initiative that would be an initiative dealing with the export and importation of LNG. Think about the Quad: the United States and Australia, two of the biggest exporters of LNG; Japan, probably the world's biggest importer; and India, who wants to be to help their economy, to help their environment. This is something else I have been pressing this administration on.

It will help our trade deficits, it will help our energy security, and—you know I have talked about this a lot—it will help global emissions. The United States right now, since 2005, has been the leader in reducing global greenhouse gas emissions, right there. The climb-down was 15 percent since 2005. India, China, everywhere else, significant increases; more American clean burning LNG to our allies in the region, the Quad. But, heck, even China would help us, our national security, our workers at home, and our environment and the global environment.

I just want to end with this: I hope all of my Senate colleagues in the next couple of days can reach out to the Biden administration and say: Look, on a number of initiatives—the Quad, Arcus—you have been going in the right direction, and you have strong bipartisan support. But the INDOPACOM economic framework led by the United States, if it is leaving out Taiwan, that is going to be a huge problem, and I don't think many U.S. Senators think that that would be a good idea.

Given our long history of leading in a bipartisan way on issues related to Taiwan, I am asking my colleagues to also reach out to the administration and say, there has to be a better way. We cannot economically isolate and forget about Taiwan when we need to be supporting them now more than ever.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 1195

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, on April 16, 2021, the House passed H.R. 1195, the Workplace Violence Prevention for Healthcare and Social Service Workers Act. That legislation, sponsored by Congressman JOE COURTNEY, passed the House 254 to 166 with the support of 38 Republicans.

This legislation directs the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to issue a standard requiring healthcare and social service employers to write and implement a workplace violence prevention plan to protect employees from violent incidents.

In the year since that legislation passed the House, we have been unable to generate the same level of support from our Republican colleagues needed to pass this legislation in the Senate. This is disappointing because the issue of protecting our healthcare and social

service workers has never been more important.

Roughly three-quarters of all nonfatal workplace injuries happen to healthcare workers.

While it is too early to have comprehensive data from the pandemic, evidence from healthcare organizations suggests that workplace violence has exploded during the pandemic, nearing crisis levels for healthcare and social service workers. This workplace violence crisis is surely contributing to the staffing shortages that many healthcare employers have warned us about.

In Wisconsin, vacancy rates for healthcare positions have been increasing, and threats against healthcare workers are viewed as the main culprit. These workers care for our loved ones and comfort us in our most trying times. They deserve to have the safe environment in which to do their work that this legislation provides.

So as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1195 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. BRAUN. Reserving the right to object, I come from the business world and know firsthand that employers care about their employees. If you don't keep your workplace safe—we just discussed it today in the Budget hearing—they are not going to stick with you. I think the question is about how you address those issues. I am married to a lifelong business owner in our hometown downtown that would say the same thing.

None of us who own businesses think—unless you get very, maybe large, where you think you don't need to pay attention to basic common sense and the rules—you need something, I think, that addresses the issue from here.

You know, I think that so often when there is an issue, there is just a tendency to reflex to the Federal Government. What is not considered are the costs and how it might actually play out.

In this case, I do acknowledge the issue, but I think the bill is in search of maybe a problem in the sense that we have got a mechanism that already works. I will talk about that here in a moment.

OSHA is there to find these issues and adjudicate them accordingly, and I think what this would do is not lend the marginal benefit and would end up, like many bills, adding redtape and costs.

It has two budget points of order as well. Those are complicated. I just believe there are better options.

Let me talk about this: I introduced the Voluntary Protection Program Act that has the same approach in mind, aiming at the same problem. I did it with my colleague from Colorado, Senator BENNET. It allows OSHA to work alongside employers and workers to encourage businesses without going through the redtape or the dictate of the Federal Government, and it has been successful.

It is not like we are trying to reinvent the wheel. It makes businesses exempt from bureaucratic requirements as long as, in good faith, they are trying to address the underlying issues.

Look at this. In its current form, it safeguards nearly 1 million workers, 700 local unions, and 2,200 worksites. VPP sites have shown injury and illness rates 50 percent lower than their industry averages.

This is something that we should be incorporating across the system because it is working, and it is working with an enforcement Agency and businesses solving the problem before we give an overall framework from here down.

It has been around for over 40 years, demonstrated its success. I think it would be a better approach to a problem. I acknowledge it is just not being used broadly enough. After all, it is kind of the way I think things should work first before you create a law.

I will ask for consent here shortly to pass the VPP Act. Let me add one important note that is personal to many in this Chamber. The 116th Congress was my first as a U.S. Senator, as a freshman. I was assigned to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and I had the great honor to serve alongside Senator Mike Enzi, who was the chair of the Budget Committee. This was his bill.

Senator Enzi was known as one of the individuals here never to shirk an issue but come up with commonsense ways that wouldn't add further to our debt, add more bureaucracy, but still solve the issue. This bill addresses a program that he cared about deeply that needs to be put into statute, to where it is used more broadly, and I was honored to take the lead on this act, along with Senator BENNET.

My bill is a no-brainer. Employers get the choice to participate. It has a proven track record, and it makes workplaces safer. It is a win-win for all involved.

Therefore, I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, obviously, I am very disappointed, and I would point out that a voluntary measure, as my colleague on the HELP Committee just described, is not what we need when we step up to help protect our frontline workers in emergency rooms and in multiple settings where there is, sadly, an increasing propensity for violence.

Yesterday, I met with members of the American College of Emergency Physicians, the people who work on the frontlines in our emergency departments and emergency rooms across the country—as well as the emergency nurses. One after another, they shared stories of the violence they see and experience. I can't imagine walking into work every day knowing that this could be the day that someone was going to be struck or injured.

A doctor talked about being strangled with his stethoscope. A nurse talked about hearing a fellow nurse being punched and then falling on the floor, unconscious, and now with a concussion. I met a nurse several years ago from Wisconsin who was beaten so severely by a patient that she can no longer work in nursing.

We are not talking about studying a problem and coming up with a voluntary solution; we are talking about a crisis happening to our healthcare workers and at a time when they are also dealing with a pandemic.

Healthcare workers, social service workers, nurses, and doctors have been here this week. We will have more coming next week. These frontline heroes, who have endured so much, deserve the protection of an enforceable OSHA standard, not just a voluntary program, which is already the status quo.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1081

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 1081 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the Braun substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. BALDWIN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I suppose I prematurely gave my reasons for objecting as I responded to Senator BRAUN's objection to passing the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act; but, again, this is pretty much the status quo. If it is a voluntary program, it is not an enforceable OSHA standard; and these frontline heroes who have endured so much over the past few years, with increases in violence and during the pandemic, deserve the legislation that I have sponsored, the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act. The House passed it over a year ago, and that is what we should be taking up.

So I object.