

As I said in my opening remarks, we have always paid our bills on time. If you don't do it, really bad things happen to all Americans. So let's get that done, and then let's have our conversation about budget priorities.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The Senator from Texas.

CHINA

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I rise today to speak about a gross miscarriage of justice—the imprisonment of Mark Swidan by the Government of China and the Chinese Communist Party.

Mark is from Luling, a small city in my home State of Texas. His mother, Ms. Katherine Swidan, still lives in Luling, while Mark eventually became a resident of Houston, my hometown. For over 10 years, Katherine has been waging a desperate battle to see her son again.

In 2012, Mark traveled to China on a business trip, which turned into a nightmare. On November 13, 2012, Mark was abducted by China's Public Security Bureau while he was taking his family back home. A witness to the abduction has said that Mark was detained because Chinese officials wanted to view the contents of his cell phone.

Mark was accused of being a part of a criminal conspiracy with 11 other individuals to manufacture and traffic drugs—charges that Mark has denied and which have been debunked over and over again.

Chinese authorities tried to coerce Mark into confessing. He refused, and he pleaded not guilty in a trial that occurred in November 2013. During the trial, the prosecution didn't produce any forensic evidence to back up their allegations, and no drugs were found on Mark or in his hotel room. Records in Mark's passport showed that he wasn't even in China during the time of the alleged offenses, and the 11 other individuals indicted in relation to this alleged drug conspiracy couldn't identify Mark. Nevertheless, outrageously, in 2019, a Chinese court sentenced Mark to death.

Mark remains unjustly detained today. He is suffering in a Chinese prison right now, as we speak. In prison, Mark has been kept in deplorable, abusive conditions. His jailers seek to break his will and break his faith. They have confiscated his Bible and his rosary. Mark's cell exposes him to extreme heat and extreme cold. He is deprived of sleep and subjected to physical abuse. He is in danger of high blood pressure, skin infections, and asthma. He has lost more than 100 pounds. His health is dire. Throughout all of this, Mark has been denied access to his family and access to American diplomats.

Mark has communicated with his mother, and his mother has told me and told the world that the Chinese communist government has failed to

break Mark's faith, which remains strong.

I spoke with Mark's mother earlier this week. This is a mom whose heart is breaking. This is a mom who wants to see her son again. This is a mom who wants to hold and hug and care for the son she loves.

The treatment of Mark has been atrocious, so much so that even the United Nations has called on China to release him. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention—a U.N. group of human rights experts who investigate cases of arbitrary detention around the world—found that Mark is being held in violation of customary international law and international norms, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The world can see that the Chinese Communist Party is trying to use hostages and hostage taking as a tool of statecraft. The Chinese Communist Party says they want to be taken seriously as a great power and a great nation, and they say they want to be respected on the global stage. But their treatment of Mark is not how great nations and great powers behave; their treatment of Mark is how third-world despots act.

I have drafted and this week introduced a resolution calling on the Chinese Government and the Chinese Communist Party to immediately release Mark. I am joined by my colleague from Texas, Senator CORNYN, and by Representative CLOUD from Texas in the House, who has introduced the same resolution in the House of Representatives. This resolution not only calls for Mark's immediate release, it also condemns China for withholding from Mark access to his family and to proper medical care.

Furthermore, it calls on the Biden administration to prioritize efforts to secure Mark's release, both in their conversations with Chinese diplomats and in international forums. In a few days, Secretary of State Blinken will be in Beijing, and he will have an opportunity to finish the final chapter of this tragedy. I am calling on the Biden administration to use all of the tools at our disposal to secure Mark's release, and I am calling on the Government of China to finally release Mark.

This ordeal has to end. It has to end for Mark. It has to end for his mother. It has to end for his family. We must and will do more so that Mark can come home.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). The Senator from Nevada.

AMENDING THE CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT TO FIX A TECHNICAL ERROR IN THE DEFINITIONS

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 223, introduced earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows: A bill (S. 223) to amend the Controlled Substances Act to fix a technical error in the definitions.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 223) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 223

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

SECTION 1. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT.

Section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (58) as paragraph (59);

(2) by redesignating the second paragraph designated as paragraph (57) (relating to the definition of "serious drug felony") as paragraph (58); and

(3) by moving paragraphs (57), (58) (as so redesignated), and (59) (as so redesignated) 2 ems to the left.

NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 11.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 11) designating the week of January 22 through January 28, 2023, as "National School Choice Week".

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

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I ask unanimous consent 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 11) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of January 23, 2023, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

CONGRATULATING THE SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY JACK-RABBITS ON WINNING THE 2023 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION I FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP SUBDIVISION TITLE

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 22, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 22) congratulating the South Dakota State University Jackrabbits on winning the 2023 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Football Championship Subdivision title.

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

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I ask unanimous consent 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 with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 22) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 214 AND S. 219

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I understand there are two bills at the desk, and I ask for their first reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the first time en bloc.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 214) to allow reciprocity for the carrying of certain concealed firearms.

A bill (S. 219) to provide that Members of Congress may not receive pay after October 1 of any fiscal year in which Congress has not approved a concurrent resolution on the budget and passed the regular appropriations bills.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading and object to my own request en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The bills will receive a second reading on the next legislative day.

MORNING BUSINESS

RECOGNIZING THE ARKANSAS MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. COMMISSION

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize and congratulate the Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission's 30th anniversary.

For three decades, the Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission has worked to promote and preserve the life and legacy of Dr. King in The Natural State and advocate the principles of nonviolence and equality among all citizens.

Dr. King devoted his life to pursuing equality and fighting injustice. His leadership of the civil rights movement ushered in a turning point in our country's history. His vision and influence will forever be part of America's identity.

Arkansas's MLK Jr. Commission works year-round teaching about the life of Dr. King and encouraging us all to take action to improve the lives of others. Through programs devoted to empowering individuals and communities, it has made a positive difference and inspired the next generation of leaders.

The commission organizes a number of community outreach projects that help further education, foster appreciation of history, and encourage youth to engage in positive leadership development right in their own neighborhoods and beyond. Notably, it hosts one of the largest national celebrations and day of service events in recognition of Dr. King.

It has been praised by Dr. Bernice King, daughter of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as one of the most active commissions in the country. In 2017, the group hosted what was coined a MegaKing Fest that emphasized a theme of "Passing the Torch" of the civil rights icon's legacy to future generations.

I am pleased to congratulate the Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission on this milestone of 30 years of service to our State. Dr. King's legacy and mission live on through its efforts and we are proud of what it represents and the impact is continues to make.

TRIBUTE TO LON PRIBBLE

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, today I am pleased to recognize the dedication of an exemplary civil servant, Mr. Lon Pribble, on the occasion of his upcoming retirement. Lon Pribble began his service to the Nation as a cadet in the U.S. Military Academy in 1979, serving as a military officer until his first retirement at the rank of lieutenant colonel in 2005. However, as a dedicated, energetic individual, he could not stay away from Army service for long. He soon began supporting the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, also known as ERDC, as a contractor analyst. In 2010, Lon became the director of government and legislative affairs for ERDC as a civil servant. My staff and I have had the pleasure of working with him ever since. In his role, Mr. Pribble has communicated the Army's emerging research priorities as well as how my constituents at ERDC help meet the needs of American warfighters. His deep knowledge of key legislative issues and advice to Army leaders and Members of Congress alike positively impacted the Army's interests with Congress. He has kept us informed about facility improvements, changes in the workforce, and partnerships that ERDC is developing throughout Mississippi and the rest of the Nation.

Part of the legacy Lon Pribble leaves at ERDC is an enhanced capability to meet critical Army research needs. He did this through his work supporting facility upgrades, such as construction of the Fragmentation Research Lab-

oratory, the Target Preparation Facility, and the Supercomputing Research Center. Through these efforts and many others, the four ERDC laboratories in Vicksburg have become world-class facilities, and I am proud to represent them. While I am particularly grateful for his work in Mississippi, I know that he similarly supported improvements to the Army's research and development capabilities in other locations across the Nation. These efforts include a new annex housing researchers who study military beach operations in the Outer Banks of North Carolina, and an expansion of the Permafrost Research Tunnel near Fairbanks, AK, which is improving our understanding of the Arctic terrain. During his tenure at ERDC, Lon Pribble's experience in facilities led him to become a resource to the broader defense research enterprise by chairing a government panel charged with assessing defense laboratory infrastructure issues.

Lon Pribble is an outgoing personality and was instrumental in making connections for industry and academic partners across the State and the Nation to help carry out ERDC's mission. I have appreciated his efforts to ensure that partnerships between ERDC and Mississippi universities continue to grow, advance the science and technology to meet Army needs, and develop a diverse student talent pool experienced in Army priorities.

For these efforts, Lon Pribble has received numerous civilian recognitions in addition to his former military awards, including twice receiving the Commander's Award for Civilian Service in 2016 and in 2020. These honors recognize that Lon Pribble has embodied the Army's ideal of selfless service as both a military officer and a civilian. I join my constituents in thanking Lon Pribble for his commitment to our State and the Nation and wish him a happy retirement.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO JUSTIN HEUPEL

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today I have the honor of recognizing Justin Heupel of Flathead County for his dedication to his students and passion for advancing agriculture education in Montana.

Originally from Culbertson, MT, Mr. Heupel first joined FFA as a student in 1988. His passion for farming and ag took him to Montana State University where he received a degree in agricultural education—"Go Cats!" He has served Montana as an educator for 27 years and has spent the last 19 years teaching at the H.E. Robinson Agricultural Education Center in Kalispell, where he also serves as a faculty adviser for FFA.

Mr. Heupel has been instrumental in improving and expanding ag education