

schools, OK? I wish they were—not when 40 percent of the lower grades are only A or B. Once again, the adults who don't want to be embarrassed are inflating those grades, too, and now they have started on the Graduate Exit Examination. But this is a bridge too far.

All is not lost. BESE, which, as I said, passed this rule change by one vote—and by the way, our superintendent of education was against it.

This rule change is going in front of the Louisiana Legislature for an oversight hearing and the Senate Education Committee and the House Education Committee. I hope that either the Senate or House and hopefully both will say no—no—because this change represents what George Bush, President Bush, called “the soft bigotry of low expectations”—“the soft bigotry of low expectations.” It has no place in this country, and it has no place in my State.

I am embarrassed that the people who are part of the education establishment in Louisiana are telling the rest of the world: Our kids are not good enough. They can't learn. So we are going to give them a diploma that is not really a diploma.

Thank you for the time today, Madam President. I wanted my colleagues to know what is going on in Louisiana. We are going to turn this rule back, and we are going to put our kids first in Louisiana, not the adults.

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.

Ms. ROSEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ISRAEL

Ms. ROSEN. Madam President, I rise today as a Senator, as a former president of a synagogue, as the only Jewish mother in the U.S. Senate, as a steadfast supporter of Israel, and as a person who stands firmly against hate and terrorism around the world.

Since October 7, when Hamas launched a horrific and unprovoked terrorist attack on the Israeli people, our hearts—well, our hearts have been shattered. And over the past week and a half, we have learned that 1,300 innocent Israeli civilians and soldiers have been murdered. Thousands more have been injured. And countless families are grieving for loved ones who have been kidnapped, who at this very moment are being held hostage by Hamas—young children, women, seniors, some of whom even were Holocaust survivors.

This past weekend, I met with these families in Israel as part of a bipartisan Senate delegation, meeting with parents whose children—their children, their babies—that is how they called

them: My babies. They have my babies, a mother said.

They were ripped away from them by terrorists. Hearing those stories, seeing the fear and the pain in their eyes, feeling their heartbreak is something that will stay with me for the rest of my life.

And there is one story in particular that I am never going to forget. A woman, whose family member was taken from her by Hamas, spoke to us, and in speaking about her pain, she said:

We no longer live in the same world as you.

We no longer live in the same world as you. For her and her family, she said, every moment is an eternity. Just think about that, think about what they feel every single day that they are separated from their loved ones, not knowing how they are doing, not knowing if they are being tortured, if they are in pain, if they are even still alive.

And with each passing day—each passing day—these families, they anxiously await for their loved ones, hopefully, to be returned to them. And these stories, these stories demonstrate why I am going to do everything in my power to make sure that these families are made whole again.

We know that Hamas is currently holding nearly 200 innocent people, including Americans, many of them in dire need of medical attention. So we cannot stay silent. We must speak out until every hostage is released—every single one of them.

And that is why last night, I introduced a bipartisan resolution condemning Hamas for its brutal, brutal, premeditated attacks on Israel and demanding that Hamas immediately release the hostages so they can be reunited with their loved ones.

After what I saw, after what I experienced on the ground, I know we need to take decisive, bipartisan, and immediate action to help Israel. Let us take action to free the hostages, pass supplemental funding, aid to our ally in its greatest time of need, and provide Israel with all the support it needs to defend itself from acts of terrorism.

And at the same time, we need to make sure that Palestinian civilians receive humanitarian aid and that it does not ever, ever, end up in the hands of Hamas terrorists. Israelis and Palestinians alike have been victims of Hamas's terror. We have seen how Hamas uses Palestinian civilians as human shields to—which has led to the death of countless—countless—innocent residents in Gaza.

And so we will continue to support Israel's efforts to eliminate Hamas once and for all and limit civilian casualties. And as we do this, let's use the full force of the Senate, both sides of the aisle, to send a clear and decisive message to Hamas.

Let us all tell those cowards who kidnapped children, who kidnapped seniors, that the United States will not stand by and let these crimes occur. We will not rest until the hostages are free, until justice is delivered.

So I urge all of my colleagues to support my resolution and send a clear—and united message to the world.

I yield the floor.

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.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 1390

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, last Saturday, October 7, we saw evil personified. We saw the deadliest attack on the Jewish state since the Yom Kippur War, over 1,400 dead Israelis. And, for context, think of that. If that were America, it would be over 40,000 dead Americans. On top of that, we have seen 30 Americans lose their lives because of the evil brought upon Israel. We saw Hamas—an evil, terrorist organization—launch an unprecedented, unprovoked, undeniably devastating attack on the Jewish state.

I can't think of anything more evil than the images that we saw coming out of Israel where grandmothers were taken captive, where babies were burned alive, and where babies were beheaded. For what reason? For what reason did we see the atrocities and the evil brought upon a people? Simply because they were Jews.

Hamas, their goal is to eliminate the Jewish state, but that is not where they stop. They want to annihilate every single Jewish person on the planet, with more than 6 million living here at home in America. But they go one step further. They despise Western democracy. They want the elimination, the annihilation, of our entire way of life.

Fighting that war with the single-minded focus is exactly what we should expect from the Jewish people, from the State of Israel, from the Prime Minister, Prime Minister Netanyahu. He needs to have a single-minded focus.

But that is not the case because we have seen, in the last 24 hours or so, the emergence of a different kind of war that they now must fight. It is the war of misinformation. The disinformation, the misinformation war could be just as deadly, if not more deadly, than the actual attack we saw last Saturday, October 7.

One might ask the question: Why would I say that? Well, I would say that because immediately what we have seen since the devastation in Israel was Prime Minister Netanyahu sending the signal that they were coming into Gaza, giving people, the Palestinians, a chance to find themselves out of harm's way.

But the misinformation campaign takes a different turn, a different spin,

a different direction. What it said was that the hospital strike was, in fact, carried out by Israel. That misinformation was carried in the New York Times, the AP, and other news outlets in America. That misinformation campaign caused a summit in Jordan to be canceled. It caused President Biden's meetings to be canceled. It caused protests at embassies around the globe. Our Embassies, around the world, felt the devastation of misinformation, of lies, signaling to the world that now Israel must fight a different kind of war at the exact same time that they have a proportional response, which is and should be wiping Hamas off the face of the map.

We saw, as a result of that misinformation war, Hezbollah mobilizing. We have seen very clearly an attempt to weaken Israel and their standing in the world. Devastation after devastation and then, on top of that, we see the emergence of another deadly encounter.

Rather than waiting for the facts, these outlets carried the Hamas narrative, carrying the narrative of an evil, lying terrorist organization.

On top of that and equally as devastating is to see the divide within the House of Representatives, where the vast majority of Republicans and Democrats stand firm with our ally Israel. But there are Members in the Squad who have decided to continue spreading the propaganda of Hamas. Congresswoman TLAIB has yet to delete the tweet that says "Israel just bombed the Baptist Hospital killing 500 Palestinians (doctors, children, patients) just like that."

Delete the tweet. We cannot have Members of the U.S. Congress sending out and being an extension of the Hamas propaganda machine. It is despicable behavior from elected representatives of the greatest Nation on God's green Earth.

Those Members did not start their anti-Semitic comments on October 8. This started months and even years prior. There is a cancer that is metastasizing on the radical extreme left that has to be dealt with in America. I have said several times over the past several days that Psalm 122:6 is so important, that we should "pray for the peace of Jerusalem," and those who do "will prosper."

There is no doubt in my heart, there is no doubt in my mind that we find ourselves living in dangerous times in this world. Conflicts in Eastern Europe, now conflicts in the Middle East, and real threats in the Indo-Pacific. We need American mettle. We need American leadership. And we need it to be strong, defiant, clear, and undeniably the strongest force for good on the planet.

It is one of the reasons why I made strong comments about the terrible decision—the unbelievable decision—to release \$6 billion for hostages.

I said this during the Obama administration—that paying \$400 million for

hostages would make more Americans less safe abroad and raise the price on every head. Now with \$6 billion being paid to Iran, with Iran being the chief funder of Hamas—after the attacks, Hamas thanked Iran for the help. We do not need an administration to be complicit with such challenging evil attacks on the Jewish State.

That is one of the reasons why I seek consent to pass my legislation, the Solidify Iran Sanctions Act. In 1996, we put in place sanctions on Iran. We did so in the sector of their energy sector, because we understood that causing pain—causing pain—would be an important and necessary component of keeping Iran in its place, to slow down, if not stop, the spread of terrorism.

I am thankful. I am thankful that in 1996 we did act, but that action is set to sunset. It is set to expire. We must keep those sanctions in place, without any question.

I look at the support. I look at the support for my legislation. This legislation predates the attacks on the nation of Israel. This bill has the support from both sides of the aisle. It is a commonsense step to make permanent the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996, and support comes from both sides of the aisle, including the only Jewish mother in the Senate, Senator ROSEN. These are one of the many steps we must take to restrain this regime from developing weapons that threaten the safety and security around the world.

I believe that if we want to respond to this brutality, if we want to respond to this evil, one of the ways that we can respond is by making permanent the sanctions on Iran.

I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 1390 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The senior Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I appreciate the passion with which the Senator from South Carolina has delivered his remarks today. I am also grateful for his willingness to adopt a minor modification in the savings clause, clarifying that nothing in this legislation may be construed as independently authorizing the use of military force against Iran or any country. It is something we should do independently.

So I am grateful for the Senator from South Carolina's willingness to work with me on that and that he has agreed to do it.

The junior Senator from Kentucky, Senator PAUL, has suffered a death in his family and is away today attending the funeral of that immediate family member. At his request, I am here to object on his behalf.

On behalf of Senator PAUL, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, I am deeply disappointed that common sense seems to be harder to find in Washington, DC. It is just not common enough.

I certainly hope that we have an opportunity to see SISA—my bill—make permanent the sanctions against Iran. It is critically important that we show progress sidelining the largest state supporter of terrorism in the world.

I yield the floor.

RECESS UNTIL 5 P.M. TODAY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 5 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 3:40 p.m., recessed, and reassembled at 5 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO).

MORNING BUSINESS—Continued

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 489

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, I stand again in support of our great ally Israel.

The terror and devastation unleashed on Israel by Iran-backed Hamas terrorists has rightly horrified the world. What I am about to describe is difficult to say and uncomfortable to hear, but it has to be said on the Senate floor. We cannot make this stuff up. The world must know the atrocities that have occurred in Israel.

On the morning of Saturday, October 7, 2023, as families rose to start a new day, make breakfast, or slowly wake up in their beds, terror approached. Innocent families were murdered in their homes. Babies were killed. Innocent, little babies were murdered, and some were ruthlessly beheaded. Children were burned alive. Teenage girls were raped and then burned alive. An elderly, wheelchair-bound woman, who was later identified as a Holocaust survivor, was brutally dragged through the streets of Gaza. Children who witnessed the murders of their parents were kidnapped and are now being held hostage by Hamas. More than 250 young people were savagely murdered while attending a music festival in southern Israel—many shot in the back as they tried to run away.

At least 31 Americans—31 Americans—have been killed. More than 1,400 innocent people were killed in Israel, and we have no idea how many are being held hostage by Iran-backed Hamas terrorists in Gaza. The atrocities are too numerous to fully recount, but the images seen will never leave our memories.

I was sent a photo of Kfar Aza. I visited this kibbutz during a trip to Israel