

separate code for direct support professionals, and for other purposes.”.

### HELPING ELIMINATE LIMITATIONS FOR PROMPT RESPONSE AND RECOVERY ACT

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 348, S. 3648.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3648) to amend the Post-Katrina Management Reform Act of 2006 to repeal certain obsolete requirements, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

S. 3648

*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 “Helping Eliminate Limitations for Prompt Response and Recovery Act” or the “HELP Response and Recovery Act”.

#### SEC. 2. REPEAL OF OBSOLETE DHS CONTRACTING REQUIREMENTS.

The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 (Public Law 109–295; 120 Stat. 1394) is amended by striking section 695 (6 U.S.C. 794).

#### SEC. 3. REPORTS.

(a) COVERED PERIOD DEFINED.—In this section, the term “covered period” means—

(1) with respect to an initial report required under subsection (b), the period between the date of enactment of this Act and the date of the report; and

(2) with respect to any succeeding report required under subsection (b), the period between the date of the most recent report and the succeeding report.

(b) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 540 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter until the date that is 5 years thereafter, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report that—

(1) reviews how the repeal under section 2 has—

- (A) prevented waste, fraud, and abuse; and
- (B) promoted taxpayer savings; and

(2) includes, with respect to a contract entered into or extended by the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency under urgent and compelling circumstances during the covered period for which the Administrator did not solicit bids—

- (A) the number of those contracts;
- (B) the subject of each contract;
- (C) the amounts obligated by the Administrator for each contract;
- (D) if applicable, the State benefitted by each contract; and

(E) if applicable, the name of the major disaster or emergency for which each contract was entered into or extended.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I further ask that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to; that the bill,

as amended, 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 committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 3648), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

### RECOGNIZING THE SERIOUSNESS OF WIDESPREAD HEALTH CARE WORKER BURNOUT IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN HEALTH WORKFORCE WELL-BEING, AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF MARCH 18, 2024, AS THE INAUGURAL “HEALTH WORKFORCE WELL-BEING DAY OF AWARENESS”

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 567.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 567) recognizing the seriousness of widespread health care worker burnout in the United States and the need to strengthen health workforce well-being, and expressing support for the designation of March 18, 2024, as the inaugural “Health Workforce Well-Being Day of Awareness”.

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

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, 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. 567) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of February 28, 2024, under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

### RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES AND THE SUPPORT IT PROVIDES TO MUNICIPALITIES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 583.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 583) recognizing the 100th anniversary of the National League of Cities and the support it provides to municipalities across the United States.

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

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing no further debate, the question is on adoption of the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 583) was agreed to.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I ask unanimous consent that 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 preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 7, 2024, under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

### RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions: S. Res. 601, S. Res. 602, S. Res. 603, S. Res. 604, and S. Res. 605.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

### ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Thursday, March 21; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of Executive Calendar No. 117, Jose Rodriguez, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor; further, that at 11:30 a.m. the motion to proceed to the vote by which cloture was not agreed to on the Rodriguez nomination be agreed to, the motion to reconsider the failed cloture vote be

agreed to, and the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Rodriguez nomination, upon reconsideration; further, that if cloture is invoked, all time be considered expired at 2 p.m.; that following the confirmation vote, the Senate resume legislative session for the consideration of Calendar No. 340, S.J. Res. 62, that the motion to proceed be agreed to and the Senate immediately vote on passage of the joint resolution; that upon disposition of the joint resolution, the Senate resume executive session and resume consideration of the Schydlower nomination; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Thursday's session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

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

#### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator SANDERS.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

#### ISRAEL

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, we are currently witnessing one of the worst humanitarian disasters in modern history, and the United States is complicit. Anyone who turns on the television or opens a newspaper can see the unbelievable devastation now taking place in Gaza. We can see—if we choose to see—the images of starving, emaciated children. And that is because one of our closest allies, Israel—a country we have poured tens of billions of dollars into—has created a situation in which hundreds of thousands of people are slowly starving to death.

The United States of America cannot—and must not—be complicit in this unspeakable tragedy. We cannot be complicit in starvation as a military strategy. We cannot be complicit in the physical and emotional destruction of an entire generation of beautiful Palestinian children.

For months, the United Nations and other aid organizations have warned about imminent starvation and possible famine in Gaza. And now that is exactly what is happening.

How did we get to this point? How have we—the Congress of the United States—allowed this situation to reach this point?

Nobody disputes that Hamas—a terrorist organization—started this war with its barbaric, brutal attack against Israel on October 7, which killed 1,200 innocent people and took more than 250 hostages.

And as I have consistently said, Israel had the right to respond to that

attack and go to war against Hamas. But it did not—and it does not—have the right to go to war against the entire Palestinian people, which is exactly what it has done and what it is doing right now.

Almost 32,000 Palestinians have been killed, and almost 74,000 have been wounded, two-thirds of whom are women and children. So 1.8 million Palestinians—80 percent of the population of Gaza—have been driven from their homes. Nearly 70 percent of the housing units and more than half of all buildings in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed. Nothing has been spared—not refugee camps, not schools, not hospitals, not U.N. facilities. All have been bombed.

In the wake of the Hamas attack, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant declared a total siege of Gaza. He said:

We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly . . . There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed.

Well, he has kept his word. In many parts of Gaza today, there is no electricity or fuel. Hospitals have been destroyed, and water infrastructure has been made inoperable.

Israel has also blocked communications networks, making it impossible for humanitarian organizations to safely coordinate aid deliveries.

In this context, over 4 months ago in November, the U.N. first began to warn of severe shortages of food and water in Gaza—4 months ago—and of the imminent risk of starvation and possible famine. And aside from a brief pause in the fighting in late November which allowed aid to come in, very little has changed.

In December, the U.N. reported that Israel's blockade of food and water meant that a quarter of the population of Gaza—over half a million people—were one step away from famine.

In January, Senators VAN HOLLEN and MERKLEY went to the Rafah Crossing from Egypt to learn what was preventing humanitarian aid from getting into Gaza. They saw miles of trucks waiting, often for weeks, to be cleared by the Israelis.

They reported that trucks are unloaded and reloaded repeatedly. And if a single item is rejected, the entire cargo must start the weeklong process all over again.

And they heard about items being rejected for no reason, such as tents, medical kits, and water filters. In other words, our colleagues saw a process that was completely broken and no Israeli interest in fixing it, despite the profound humanitarian crisis that was developing.

It is difficult to look at these facts and not see, at worst, an intentional Israeli effort to starve the people of Gaza of what they need to survive and, at best—at best—a complete disregard for Palestinian lives.

And sure enough, in January, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said at a press conference that “we provide minimal humanitarian aid. . . . If we

want to achieve our war goals, we give the minimal aid.”

The situation, as a result, has continued to get worse and worse and worse. In the north, almost no humanitarian aid has gotten through in February. The Israelis rejected most U.N. attempts to deliver aid to the north and then began actually targeting the police who escort U.N. aid trucks. Amid the desperation of north Gaza, this has led to incidents in which hundreds of starving Palestinians, desperate to secure food, were shot by Israeli troops or trampled in the chaos.

For 3 weeks now, reports have emerged of people eating leaves and animal feed to try to stay alive, and the first long-feared reports are coming in of children dying from malnutrition and dehydration.

A few aid convoys are now getting through to the north. Under intense U.S. pressure, Israel has allowed about half—half—of the requested humanitarian missions to proceed in recent weeks. But that is still nowhere near enough to reverse months of starvation and stave off a wave of deaths from malnutrition, dehydration, and preventable diseases.

Earlier this week, the U.N. and other humanitarian NGOs released a new version of their most comprehensive assessment of the food crisis, called the IPC. I would just like to read the headline here.

Famine is imminent as 1.1 million people, half of Gaza, experience catastrophic food insecurity.

That is the headline. The report goes on to say that “extremely critical levels of acute malnutrition and mortality [are] imminent for more than two-thirds of the people in the north.” And that is a technical way of saying that more than 200,000 people are now starving to death and that if nothing changes, more than a million people could starve.

At least 31 people, including 27 children, have already died of starvation and dehydration. And the real total is much likely higher, as aid organizations and medical teams are unable to reach the hardest hit areas.

UNICEF said on Friday that nearly one in three children under 2 years of age in northern Gaza suffers from acute malnutrition.

We put billions and billions of dollars into Israel year after year. And today, nearly one in three children under 2 years of age in northern Gaza suffer from acute malnutrition.

Once a young child reaches that point, it is very difficult to reverse the process. The child's body consumes itself from within, and only through careful medical treatment can they be saved—treatment that is impossible without a functioning healthcare system, a system that certainly does not exist in Gaza today.

Let me repeat. We can hide our eyes. We can talk about a million other things. We can talk about this and that and everything else. But right now, the