

mine from the State of Washington, representative Joel Kretz.

Since 2005, Joel has been dutifully serving the people of Washington's 7th legislative district. As the largest and most rural district in the State, his dedication may be exemplified in just how long his commute is, over 600 miles round trip between Olympia and his ranch in central Washington.

He has been a champion of responsible land management, a crucial advocate in the fight for wildfire management, and a true defender of the western way of life.

His legislative accomplishments, though many, are not the most interesting thing about Joel. He is a true cowboy, world-class horse breeder, and the embodiment of what it means to be from rural America. Did I say that he is also a great friend of mine.

Now it is time for Joel to hang up his coat and tie, put on his cowboy hat and kerchief, and focus on the long honey-do list of his wife, Luska, that she has waiting for him.

I am delighted about Joel's retirement. He has more than earned it.

ISRAEL SECURITY ASSISTANCE SUPPORT ACT

Mr. McCaul, Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1227, I call up the bill (H.R. 8369) to provide for the expeditious delivery of defense articles and defense services for Israel and other matters, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. Hinson). Pursuant to House Resolution 1227, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8369

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 "Israel Security Assistance Support Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) On October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorists launched a massive, unprovoked war on Israel, killing over 1,200 innocent people and taking over 240 hostages, including American citizens.

(2) Since October 7, Israel has faced attacks by Iran and its proxies including Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis, which have required significant military responses.

(3) Under the terms of a 2016 Memorandum of Understanding, the United States provides Israel with \$3.8 billion per year in security assistance and missile defense funding from fiscal years 2019 through 2028, which is subject to the approval of Congress.

(4) Thus far in fiscal year 2024, Congress has enacted regular and supplemental legislation appropriating \$12.5 billion in security assistance and missile defense for Israel without any additional conditions.

(5) Congress plays a vital role in oversight and approval of direct commercial sales and foreign military sales to security partners around the world, including Israel.

(6) In May 2024, it was reported that President Biden ordered a pause on certain defense articles ready for imminent delivery to

Israel, without having consulted with Congress.

(7) On May 8, 2024, President Biden stated regarding Israel, "We're not going to supply the weapons and artillery shells".

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

Congress—

(1) condemns the Biden Administration's decision to pause certain arms transfers to Israel as Israel faces unprecedented threats from Iran and its proxies, including Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis;

(2) calls on the Biden Administration to allow all previously approved arms transfers to Israel to proceed quickly to ensure that Israel can defend itself and defeat threats from Iran and its proxies, including Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis;

(3) calls on the Biden Administration to utilize all congressionally appropriated funds for security assistance for Israel as Congress intended;

(4) stands with Israel as it defends itself against the barbaric war launched by Hamas and other terrorists; and

(5) reaffirms Israel's right to self-defense.

SEC. 4. PROHIBITION.

None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available under any Act appropriating funds for the Department of Defense or the Department of State for fiscal year 2024 or any prior years may be made available—

(1) to withhold, halt, reverse, or cancel the delivery of defense articles or defense services from the United States to Israel; or

(2) to pay the salary or expenses of any officer or employee of the Department of Defense or the Department of State who takes any action to support or further the withholding, halting, reversal, or cancellation of the delivery of such defense articles or services.

SEC. 5. PROMPT DELIVERY.

(a) PROMPT DELIVERY OF DEFENSE ARTICLES AND SERVICES.—The Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of State, shall ensure prompt delivery of all defense articles and services for Israel which are expected to be delivered in fiscal years 2024 and 2025, including—

(1) those contracted through the Foreign Military Sales system;

(2) those supported by prior Acts making appropriations for the Department of Defense; and

(3) those provided pursuant to a declaration in section 506(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

(b) PROMPT DELIVERY OF DIRECT COMMERCIAL SALES.—The Secretary of State shall ensure prompt approval and delivery of all direct commercial sales of defense articles and services for Israel which are expected to be delivered in fiscal years 2024 and 2025, including those for the Ministry of Public Security.

(c) PROMPT DELIVERY OF WITHHELD ITEMS.—Any defense article and defense service described in subsection (a) or (b) of this section that were withheld from delivery as of the date of the enactment of this Act shall be delivered to Israel not later than 15 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 6. WITHHOLDING OF FUNDS.

(a) WITHHOLDING OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FUNDS.—None of the unobligated balances of funds made available by prior Acts making appropriations for the Department of Defense under the heading "Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide" for the immediate Office of the Secretary of Defense that are available as of the date of the enactment of this Act may be obligated or expended until the Secretary of Defense certifies and reports to the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Sen-

ate that the requirements of section 5(c) have been met.

(b) WITHHOLDING OF DEPARTMENT OF STATE FUNDS.—None of the unobligated balances of funds made available by prior Acts making appropriations for the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs under the heading "Diplomatic Programs" for the Office of the Secretary that are available as of the date of the enactment of this Act may be obligated or expended until the Secretary of State certifies and reports to the Committee on Appropriations and the Senate that the requirements of section 5(c) have been met.

(c) WITHHOLDING OF FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDS.—None of the unobligated balances of funds made available by prior Acts making appropriations for Financial Services and General Government under the heading "Executive Office of the President and Funds Appropriated To the President—National Security Council and Homeland Security Council" that are available as of the date of the enactment of this Act may be obligated or expended until the President certifies and reports to the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate that the requirements of section 5(c) have been met.

SEC. 7. OBLIGATION REQUIREMENT.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State shall obligate any remaining unobligated balances of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for assistance for Israel not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 8. REPORTS.

(a) INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspectors General of the Department of Defense and the Department of State shall jointly submit to Congress a report on any actions taken by executive branch officials before the date of the enactment of this Act to withhold, halt, reverse, or cancel the delivery of defense articles and defense services to Israel.

(b) MONTHLY SECURITY ASSISTANCE REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and every 30 days thereafter through fiscal year 2025, the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of State, shall provide a written report to the Committees on Appropriations, Armed Services, and Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Appropriations, Armed Services, and Foreign Relations of the Senate describing United States security assistance provided to Israel since October 7, 2023, including a comprehensive list of the defense articles and services provided to Israel and the associated authority and funding used to provide such articles and services: *Provided*, That such report shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may be accompanied by a classified annex.

(c) REPORT ON PRIORITY DEFENSE ARTICLES AND SERVICES.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of State, shall provide a written report to the Committees on Appropriations, Armed Services, and Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Appropriations, Armed Services, and Foreign Relations of the Senate describing urgent and high priority defense articles and defense services for Israel and steps taken or planned to expedite the delivery of such articles and services.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill shall be debatable for 1 hour, equally

divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCAUL. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCCAUL. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, Hamas' October 7 massacre was as cruel, barbaric, and bloody as anything I have ever seen. Hamas unleashed pure evil on Israel that day. The Hamas terrorists filmed themselves committing brutal atrocities because they were so proud of their barbaric acts.

In fact, in just hours they murdered 1,200 innocent people and took over 250 hostages, including Americans. I say this to remind my colleagues of the moral clarity that we as a body felt in the aftermath of these brutal attacks.

It was obvious to us then that Hamas was ruthless. It was obvious to us that Hamas needed to be eradicated to ensure Israel's security. It was obvious to us that Hamas would fight dirty and use innocent civilians as human shields. It was obvious to us that Israel had no choice but to win this war and end the perpetual terrorist threat.

We all, Republicans and Democrats, spent those weeks talking about our steadfast support for Israel, our ironclad commitment. In fact, Mr. MEEKS and I introduced a bipartisan resolution condemning Hamas in support of Israel which had more cosponsors than any other resolution in the history of the Congress.

However, today, I am deeply disappointed that for some in this country and for the administration that that moral clarity has faded, that their ironclad commitment apparently is not, in fact, ironclad.

In an about-face, the Biden administration is now withholding critical arms necessary for Israel to win this war. This administration wants to dictate how Israel executes the war that they were thrust into.

They did not ask for this war. They did not start this war. Hamas started this war.

Just recently, though, President Biden said that if they go into Rafah, I am not supplying the weapons, period. That would be similar for us, Madam Speaker, to say during World War II, my father's war, that you can invade all the way up to Berlin, but you can't

go into Berlin to finish the job. Imagine if we had done that with our Allies back then.

Israel is in a fight for its very existence, and this administration's public break with Israel has only made negotiations and victory more difficult.

Rafah is a final key military objective to complete the mission against Hamas.

Israel has effectively eradicated 19 battalions throughout Gaza, yet 4 remain in Rafah. This is the last stage of the military operation, and it keeps getting delayed and delayed and delayed.

We know that Hamas is exploiting this cease-fire and using the negotiation process just to buy more time.

Hamas has established a network of tunnels that total over 300 miles in Gaza. These tunnels of terror are where they are holed up ready to strike Israel at the first opportunity.

Their use of tunnels is why Israel must use these larger bombs, to destroy their command and control centers and eliminate the terrorists that find refuge in them.

By the way, contrary to what has been said publicly, these bombs when applied with JDAM kits can become precision-guided weapons. Precision means just that, precise. It goes straight to the target without collateral damage, and it does, indeed, protect innocent civilians.

We know that Yahya Sinwar, the head of Hamas, is somewhere around these tunnels. Taking him out is critical to defeating Hamas.

Madam Speaker, as the saying goes: War is hell. War is horrific. War is messy. Nobody wants war. Israel did not start this war; Hamas did. Sadly, civilian casualties are part of urban warfare. Israel has limited this number greatly and is opening all routes for humanitarian assistance.

This is despite the fact that Hamas are the ones who use human shields, hide behind hospitals and schools, and put civilians in harm's way.

It was Hamas that destroyed the Erez checkpoint on October 7, significantly impeding aid from getting into Gaza. Since then, they have repeatedly attacked another checkpoint that serves as a major artery of aid into Gaza. Egypt also is currently delaying aid through the Rafah checkpoint.

Just the other day, I saw a video of Hamas killing their own people, Palestinian children simply trying to get food out of the trucks, as they gunned down their own people.

Until Israel finishes the last major operation to remove Hamas from power, to defeat the remaining battalions that are in Rafah, we will never have the peaceful resolution that everybody wants. For until Rafah is destroyed and Hamas is destroyed, we will not be able to get to the peace talks with the Saudis and Israel and the other Arab nations that everyone is so optimistic about.

I can only think of one purpose to withhold these weapons. This adminis-

tration is more concerned about a small vocal wing of activists than the ironclad commitment that they talked about to stand by Israel.

Under this administration, I have noticed a disturbing trend, a trend where we turn our backs on our allies and fall short of the promises we make.

That is why this legislation is so important. It will ensure the weapons are delivered to Israel, and it will reassure our allies that when America makes a commitment, we keep it.

Think about this, Madam Speaker: What kind of a message is this sending both to our allies and friends and our adversaries and enemies? To our allies, it sends a message that we cannot be trusted. To our adversaries, it sends a message that they no longer fear us. It does not send a message of deterrence. It sends a message of weakness. It invites conflict, aggression, and now, yes, war.

Imagine if Iran cut off its weapons to Hezbollah and cut off its weapons to the Houthi rebels, what would be said of Iran? What would be our impression?

They believe they have achieved victory, Madam Speaker, without a shot fired, a victory handed to them by this administration tying the hands of Israel, one hand behind its back, as it moves into the final stage of this war to complete its final mission.

□ 1230

Prime Minister Netanyahu says: I will do this alone if I have to.

He should not have to do this alone. We need to stand with our ally, Israel, stand with her and stand with her to defeat this terrorist organization, Hamas, and bring a final closure and a peaceful resolution to the Middle East.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I strongly oppose H.R. 8369, which is a cynical, political exercise by my GOP colleagues to attempt to sow division and use the United States-Israel relationship and American security assistance to advance their own political agenda.

Despite what you have heard and will hear from the other side of the aisle today, Madam Speaker, there is no bigger champion for Israel's long-term security as a Jewish state than President Joe Biden. As I am, the President is committed to eliminating Hamas, and that is clear by what took place recently when he defended, along with other allies, Israel from an Iranian attack.

He visited Israel during wartime, and he has delivered unprecedented aid. To suggest that he is abandoning or harming Israel is absurd. He has been with Israel as a Senator, as a Vice President, and as a President. To insinuate that now, all of a sudden, he is not with Israel is not true at all.

Now, I hear my Republican colleagues argue that leveraging 2,000-pound bombs should not have been

done publicly. That approach has not worked. For months, the Biden administration publicly and privately urged Israel not to launch a major offensive in Rafah without credible plans to avoid mass casualties and to try to evacuate Palestinians to a safe space.

The United States has also repeatedly pressed Israel to cease using large warhead ordnance that results in excessive civilian casualties in densely populated civilian areas. Our humanitarian values are to try to save innocent lives, not saving Hamas, but trying to save innocent men, women, and children while we pursue Hamas—not cutting off all weapons, cutting off these huge bombs that kill innocent individuals—by utilizing munitions that are more appropriate for urban warfare to get Hamas.

To date, Israel has presented no plan to mitigate civilian harm or commitment to not using the 2,000-pound bombs in Rafah. To the contrary, what we heard from Prime Minister Netanyahu last week was that he repeatedly affirmed Israel's plans for an all-out assault on Rafah. That is when the Biden administration confirmed it would temporarily withhold a small number of large warhead bombs so that they would not be used in Rafah.

My Republican friends also seem to think that President Biden's actions are unprecedented, but there is a history of the United States withholding certain security assistance to Israel. Many of my GOP colleagues call themselves Reagan Republicans. Recall that President Reagan did the exact same thing based on concerns with Israel's military actions on two occasions in 1981 and 1982.

These 2,000-pound bombs in question can create a crater up to 50 feet wide and 36 feet deep when dropped. They have a lethal fragmentation to a radius the size of multiple football fields. Such bombs have no place in urban combat, not in Gaza and not in Rafah, one of the most densely populated areas on the planet. The United States has a duty and obligation under law to make sure our weapons are not disproportionately killing civilians.

This bill, H.R. 8369, prohibits the Biden administration from exercising its executive branch prerogative in holding or suspending U.S. arms transfers to Israel, including these large warhead munitions and any other defense article.

It also forces the administration to deliver any such item to Israel within 15 days of enactment and, if the administration is unable to comply, it freezes significant parts of the Defense Department, the State Department, and the National Security Council budgets. According to the Defense Department itself: Withholding defense-wide operations and maintenance funds would jeopardize DOD's ability to fulfill its constitutional obligation to defend the United States which could cause significant harm to United States national security.

Further, these budgetary freezes would undermine U.S. defense leadership when we are simultaneously competing in the Indo-Pacific, supporting Ukraine in its fight against the Russian war of aggression, and working with our partners in sub-Saharan Africa on security challenges. Again, this is all tremendously dangerous for our own national security.

The bill also includes a blatantly political attack on military officers, hardworking civil servants, and U.S. Government employees by mandating Inspector General investigations into individuals, not agencies or departments, and orders the withholding of their salaries in a brazen and politicized witch hunt.

All of these concerns would have been made clear had my Republican colleagues not rushed this bill through without any kind of regular order. Had it been marked up in the Foreign Affairs Committee, we would have been able to highlight that this legislation undercuts a number of crucial existing United States laws that are in the Foreign Affairs Committee's jurisdiction, including the Arms Export Control Act, the Leahy Law, and executive branch policies including the Conventional Arms Transfer Policy and National Security Memorandum 20.

Let me repeat: President Biden paused one arms shipment. One. The President continues to focus on freeing the hostages, to put the onus on Hamas to reach a deal, and supports Israel's right to eradicate Hamas.

That is the position of President Joseph R. Biden. Let's be clear about it.

In conclusion, consider the facts and the context. We should oppose this bill moving forward because it is not good for Israel, and it is not good for the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McCAUL. Mr. Speaker, let me just say, first, with respect to the first President I had the honor to vote for, Ronald Reagan, in 1982, it was concluded that Israel was violating U.S. and international laws by their use of cluster munitions.

In this case, the Biden administration actually concluded in a national security memo that Israel was not violating U.S. and international laws. Yet, the President still announced his plan to withhold all defensive weapons to Israel. That is a very different situation, and I wanted to rectify and clarify the RECORD on that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT), who is the author of this bill and the chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Israel Security Assistance Support Act. This bill reverses President Biden's misguided attempts to withhold vital security assistance to Israel as they fight to defend their citizens from terrorists.

Just last week, we observed Holocaust Remembrance Day, commemo-

rating the 6 million Jews who were murdered by Nazi Germany. The memory of those lives horrifically taken endures 80 years since the end of the Holocaust. A plaque at Auschwitz states: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Mr. Speaker, we can never forget.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorists launched a massive, unprovoked war on Israel, killing 1,200 innocent people and taking 240 hostages, including American citizens. It was the worst attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust.

The Israeli people are still reeling from the barbaric attacks on that day. They are unable to begin healing while still separated from their loved ones taken hostage, and they are determined to ensure no further innocent Israeli lives are taken by radical terrorists.

Over the past 6 months, Israel has been repeatedly attacked by Iran and its terrorist proxy groups: Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis. Each one of these groups has vowed repeatedly to destroy the State of Israel.

The only reason these attacks have been unsuccessful is because of Israel's robust military and because of their missile defense capability, honed by years of defending itself from attacks.

Hamas and others who seek the end of the Jewish state have not run out of weapons, resources, or willpower. In this unprovoked conflict they started, they are using none of these things to defend innocent civilians, preferring to use them instead as human shields.

Hamas has made a choice to continue the conflict by tormenting their hostages and hiding behind civilians. It is time to stop appeasing terrorists and provide Israel with the weapons and support necessary to end this war.

The United States affirmed our resolve to stand with Israel less than a month ago when we passed supplemental appropriations for Israel with strong bipartisan support. This message could not have been clearer.

Astoundingly, last week, The Washington Post reported that President Biden ordered a pause on weapons ready for delivery to Israel—literally on the truck ready to be sent to the airport and flown out to Israel immediately. These are weapons that were previously approved by Congress and the administration. These include 1,800 2,000-pound bombs and 1,700 500-pound bombs that are intended to strike Hamas' extensive tunnel network.

It was also reported that the administration was reviewing planned transfers of 6,500 joint direct attack munition kits which would bring precision to the fight and help minimize civilian casualties.

The Biden administration is ignoring the fact that the State of Israel is surrounded by people who want to destroy them. Iran does not recognize Israel and has called for its elimination. Hamas is committed to the destruction of Israel, and Hezbollah's primary goal

is the elimination of Israel. Iran and its proxies are only deterred through strength, which is why the U.S. must continue to provide weapons to Israel.

Unable to deter Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, or any other nefarious actor seeking to attack the Jewish state, the Biden administration instead is suppressing a close ally.

Members on both sides of the aisle have called for President Biden to reverse his decision. The administration should not ignore the will of Congress as evident through overwhelming bipartisan legislative action.

Unfortunately, the Biden administration's decision made it necessary for me, along with Appropriations Committee Chairman TOM COLE, State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee Chairman MARIO DIAZ-BALART, and Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee Chairman DAVID JOYCE to introduce the Israel Security Assistance Support Act.

This bill prevents the Defense and State Departments from withholding the delivery of weapons to Israel; requires the administration to ensure prompt delivery of weapons to Israel; mandates that anything withheld from delivery to Israel be delivered within 15 days and withholds funds until they are delivered; requires all assistance to Israel be obligated within 30 days; requires the Inspectors General to report on actions taken by executive branch officials to withhold security assistance to Israel. It also includes comprehensive reporting on weapons deliveries to Israel to ensure congressional intent is met.

□ 1245

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LANGWORTHY). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. McCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from California.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, it is appalling that this legislation is necessary. The reaction of the Biden administration proves that it is. A veto threat and a \$1 billion unrelated aid package were announced almost simultaneously once it became clear that the House intended to take action on that this week.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, to correct the record, President Biden never said, as I hear my colleagues saying, that he is suspending all weapons to Israel. He said specifically the 2,000-pound bombs that cause death to innocent Palestinians are the only things that were paused here, not all weapons.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, my pro-Israel efforts began long before my 28 years on the Foreign Affairs Committee, and I believe that my pro-Israel record is as long and as strong as any Member of this House.

I rise to oppose this pseudo pro-Israel bill. It purports to deal with this issue of 2,000-pound bombs. As the ranking member has pointed out, suspensions occurred also under Reagan and Ford. More significantly, this is just a communicative act. It has no strategic significance.

Israel already has such a large stockpile of 2,000-pound bombs and similar weapons that the administration is going to be providing many thousands of JDAM kits to turn those dumb bombs into smart bombs.

The chair is working with several of us on a much better response to this suspension, and I look forward to that working its way through the committee. No one should be tempted to vote for this bill. There will be a better bill.

This bill does nothing to help Israel strategically, but it attacks Israel at its two weakest points. The first is bipartisan support. Israel has one friend in the world. It cannot afford to have only one-half of one friend.

We saw that bipartisan support when 85 percent of Democrats and 85 percent of Republicans voted to provide Israel with \$14 billion of extraordinary aid, but this resolution has poison pills, including condemning Biden by name, in a clear effort to get as little Democratic support as possible.

Second, this bill attacks Israel's international image. Israel, in fact, meets American international standards for minimizing civilian casualties, but what this bill does is it exempts Israel from the Leahy and similar laws, in effect declaring from this Congress to the world that Israel can't meet the standard.

Israel is doing at least as good a job as any military in the history of urban warfare. The report from the Biden administration wasn't as clear as it should be on that but reached the right conclusion.

Congress should not step forward and exempt Israel from a test that Israel clearly meets. That is poison on the international stage.

Mr. McCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART), an original cosponsor of this bill and chairman of the Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Israel Security Assistance Support Act.

The reason we are here is because the Biden administration, despite all the rhetoric, has broken its so-called iron-clad commitment to Israel by halting shipments of weapons at a time when Israel needs them the most. These are weapons not only that Israel has asked for but that President Biden himself asked Congress to provide. This administration's argument is that the bill undermines the President's ability to "execute an effective foreign policy."

Does anyone really believe that this administration has an effective foreign policy? Do I need to remind my colleagues of what the former Secretary of Defense, Mr. Gates, said of Mr. Biden, that "he has been wrong on nearly every major foreign policy and national security issue over the past four decades"?

What the administration doesn't understand, Mr. Speaker, is what an effective foreign policy requires. It requires having the ability to distinguish allies from enemies, those fighting for their lives in self-defense versus terrorists seeking to kill, harm, and destroy them.

Israel must do what is necessary to eradicate that depraved terrorist group, Hamas, a proxy of terrorist state Iran, the same Iran which also, for the first time ever, under the weakness of this administration, directly attacked Israel.

Israel needs these weapons to eradicate the terrorists who have vowed the destruction of Israel, and Israel needs it to protect itself and its people. Withholding vital resources jeopardizes not only Israel's ability to defend itself but also our national security by harming and weakening our strongest ally.

In the Biden administration's veto threat, Mr. Speaker, it says that the rationale was to prevent unintended consequences, with no other explanation, by the way. What about the likely consequences of failure to fully support Israel now when they need it? Does the administration doubt that Hamas will seize any opening, any opportunity, to further maim, torture, and kill?

Congress approved the supplemental in a bipartisan way, and we expect the administration to follow the law and to deliver. We cannot stand by while the Biden administration tries to force Israel to fight for its very own existence with one hand tied behind its back.

I thank my colleagues, Chairman CALVERT, Chairman COLE, Chairman JOYCE, the Speaker, and Leader SCALISE, for bringing this very important bill to the floor. It is time to tell the administration: Keep your word. Support Israel. Follow the law. Send the weapons that you, Mr. President, and Israel requested.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to this political bill. This is not about policy. It is about politics. What a shame.

This is not in Israel's best interests. It is not in this Congress' best interests. The gentleman who just spoke, spoke with passion, immediacy, and urgency. Unfortunately, House Republican leadership has sought to turn it into a partisan issue on multiple occasions. This legislation is their latest attempt.

They claim President Biden is delaying some portion of aid. Where was

that outrage, I ask my colleagues, when, on November 2, you brought a bill to this floor with a poison pill that you knew would not pass and would not be signed by the President of the United States?

If it had been a clean bill, as I told you then, it would have passed with over or approximately 400 votes, but you waited 7 months—not 20 days—7 months. Where was the outrage when we waited 7 months to give Israel aid?

Also, by the way, we delayed on Ukraine, as well. Where was the outrage? I was told over and over again: Well, the Speaker is going to bring it to the floor sometime. He says he is going to bring it to the floor. Seven months—one, two, three—time went by. Where was the outrage then?

This is a political bill that does not help Israel, does not help America, and should be defeated.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a “no” vote.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SELF), a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, as a special operator in the United States Army, our commitment to each other was to leave no man behind. Our Commander in Chief does not hold to that doctrine.

President Biden has not only turned his back on our ally Israel, but he has also abandoned the Americans still being held hostage by Hamas.

My fellow Americans, this used to mean something. U.S. citizens have been held by terrorists for over 220 days, very reminiscent of the waning days of the Democratic Carter administration when American hostages were left in Iran for 444 days. They were released just minutes after President Reagan took the oath of office.

I pray the hostages in Gaza will not suffer at the hands of Hamas for another 224 days. We don't even hear the Biden administration mentioning American hostages.

Make no mistake, President Biden is aiding and abetting Hamas terrorists instead of supporting Israel.

I can just imagine the terrorists playing an endless loop of Democrat sound bites to the hostages, saying your President is on our side, with headlines like: “Biden Just Betrayed Israel—and Rewarded Hamas,” “U.S. withholding ‘sensitive intelligence’ on Hamas from Israel,” “Biden Admin Wants Israeli Forces To ‘Get Out Of Gaza,’” and “Pentagon chief confirms U.S. pause on weapons shipment to Israel.”

While our Commander in Chief signals weakness to the world and support to terrorists, I am here to send a message to those being held hostage: You are not forgotten. Congress must fight to get you out in spite of obstacles put in place by Democrats and terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, we must support Israel's right to eradicate Hamas, and

we must bring our hostages home immediately.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER), a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, today is the 223rd day since Hamas slaughtered more than 1,200 people, including 45 Americans. More than 250 people were taken hostage, and 132 are still held, including 8 Americans.

After October 7, President Biden immediately stepped in to help the Jewish state. He traveled to Israel 11 days after the attacks, the first President to do so in wartime. He dispatched two carrier strike groups and has sent hundreds of shipments of weapons to Israel.

When Iran launched more than 300 drones and missiles at Israel, the U.S. worked with our allies to defeat that attack. President Biden and Secretaries Blinken and Austin have repeatedly clarified that U.S. support for Israel is ironclad, and they continue to match those words with action, this week approving another \$100 billion in arms sales to Israel.

While the administration is doing everything in its power to support our allies, Republicans in Congress play politics.

In the early weeks of the Gaza war, the majority tried to condition aid to Israel on Republican cuts to IRS funding. It took fully 6 months after October 7 for Republicans to finally put the emergency security funding on the floor. It passed overwhelmingly with 366 votes. The delay was clearly partisan.

Let me be clear: It is wrong to withhold even just one shipment of weapons to Israel in its fight as it fights an existential, multifront war. It is okay for friends to disagree, but we must not send mixed signals to Israel's enemy about U.S. support for the mission to end Hamas' reign of terror over Gaza, to eliminate the threat to Israel, and to bring the hostages home.

Sadly, Speaker JOHNSON's approach is different. He drafted a partisan bill with no path forward. It didn't even go through the Foreign Affairs Committee, where we could have fixed it.

I can't imagine anyone in this body believes that automatically zeroing out the budget for the Departments of State and Defense and the National Security Council in the case of delayed arms is a good idea. It is a terrible, dangerous idea, and it is the reason I must vote against this bill.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK), chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary's Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement, and an original cosponsor of this bill.

□ 1300

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, on December 8, 1941, Franklin Roosevelt stood in this very Hall and asked for a declaration of war against the government that had attacked our fleet the day before at Pearl Harbor, and he solemnly pledged to win through to absolute victory.

On October 7, Hamas targeted and butchered innocent and unarmed women and children. Israel not only has a right to defeat Hamas, it has a moral duty to do so. The killing on both sides can only end with the unconditional surrender of Hamas. The sooner that day comes, the better for all humanity.

Now to hasten that day, the President requested, and the Congress provided, the precision bombs and other munitions that Israel needs to quickly bring this war to an end while minimizing civilian casualties. Now that same President is withholding that aid while sending billions of dollars of supplies into Gaza before Hamas has surrendered.

This act is treacherous, and it must not stand. This measure says so.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, let me just say this really quickly. One of the speakers before him said Democrats and terrorists are against Israel. That just shows how political this is.

Democrats and Republicans have always been with Israel. To try and distort it and say Democrats are against Israel shows that it is just a partisan argument and not for the benefit of Israel. It is for trying to play politics with this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO), the ranking member of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 8369 because Joe Biden did the right thing. He made the right decision.

The United States is a friend to the people of Israel. The United States is not a rubberstamp to an extremist Prime Minister who has not prioritized the release of hostages, who has allowed for indiscriminate killings in Gaza, and who has put his own political survival above all else.

Chairman MCCAUL said something I think that was very important. After October 7, the world stood with Israel, expressed support for Israel. I believe all of us did in a bipartisan way.

What has happened since then? Prime Minister Netanyahu has ruined the world's support. He has done so by not focusing on the hostages, but by allowing his military to bomb hospitals, ambulance convoys, people's homes, to take out journalists, aid workers, including Americans. The moral compass does not bend in favor of one nation regardless of what it does. That is why the President has done what he has done, and the President's leverage matters.

When President Biden has taken steps to exercise his leverage, we have

seen immediate results. Last month, President Biden told Israel to open the Erez Crossing in northern Gaza, and 3 days ago, dozens of WFP flour trucks entered through the western Erez Crossing, bringing desperately needed food to starving families.

After the President paused a 2,000-pound bomb shipment, less than 1 percent of the total weapons shipments to Israel, the Israeli Defense Minister raised concerns for the first time that Netanyahu has no plan to rescue the hostages or establish a functioning Palestinian Government in Gaza.

This, in many ways, is our last chance. We must do the right thing ourselves.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CLYDE), a member of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. CLYDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 8369, the Israel Security Assistance Support Act.

This critical bill ensures defense articles and services are delivered quickly to our steadfast ally, Israel, as they face unprecedented threats from Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Iran.

On October 7, Iran-backed Hamas terrorists brutally attacked Israel, murdering, raping, and torturing more than 1,200 innocent civilians, and abducting over 240 others to Gaza as hostages, including American citizens.

In the following months since this unprovoked terrorist attack, Israel has continued to be under constant assault by Iran and its proxies. We must support our ally, Israel, and ensure that they have the weapons they need to defend themselves, including the small arms, the 50,000 rifles that the Israeli Government has on order that is being held up by our State Department, and the precision-guided munitions.

It is doublespeak. It is unconscionable that the Biden administration complains about civilian collateral damage when they are withholding the exact munitions that minimize civilian collateral damage.

H.R. 8369 would ensure that all previously approved arms transfers to Israel can move forward without interruption, as well as prohibit funds from being used to stop or cancel the shipment of defense items to Israel. In addition, it would require the timely shipment of any items that have been stopped or delayed by President Biden and the Biden administration to be sent within 15 days after enactment.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in passing this critical legislation.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this bill, which, despite what the authors claim, threatens to defund our national security and torch the indispensable U.S.-Israel relationship, and

it is all being done to score cheap political points.

By now we are accustomed to Republicans bringing up nonsensical messaging bills to distract from the fact that they blocked vital aid to Israel for 6 months.

Last week, I spoke out against the delayed weapons shipment and urged the U.S. and Israel to resolve disagreements privately to maintain the united front against Hamas.

The White House and Israel are now clear that those weapons are not needed for the Rafah operation. Just this week, the Biden administration finalized more than a billion dollars in assistance to Israel. Instead of coming together to show bipartisan support for Israel's defense, Republicans return to their political playbook, cynically exploiting Israel as a political wedge issue. However, this isn't another non-binding resolution.

This dangerous, cynical bill is not pro-America or pro-Israel. The bill before us threatens to block funds to our military, the same Armed Forces which defended Israel against an Iranian missile onslaught.

This bill also imperils our diplomats who work nonstop to get hostages released. Undercutting American security undercuts Israel's security.

A plan to defund U.S. national security agencies that send assistance, share intelligence, and help defeat Hamas is exactly how you cut off your nose to spite your face.

October 7 made clear that Israel's needs can evolve overnight. I won't abide by Republicans holding our national security hostage so they can micromanage our Commander in Chief and feign how pro-Israel and pro-military they are.

If you don't like the President holding up one limited shipment for a week, and I don't, you should be livid about Speaker JOHNSON holding up all military aid for 6 months.

I won't allow shortsighted, partisan stunts to masquerade as bipartisan support for Israel. Republicans need to stop the games. Israel needs real, consistent support, not Republican users who have repeatedly made it clear that Israel cannot count on them.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. KILEY).

Mr. KILEY. Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support of the Israel Security Assistance Support Act.

President Biden's threat to withhold aid from Israel is reckless, unjustifiable, and indecent. It flies in the face of the bipartisan support this House recently showed for continuing support of Israel. The American public understands the importance of the American-Israel relationship, how it is in the national security interests of both countries.

The American public understands that Israel is our longstanding ally, a democracy in a region that has very few of them; whereas, Hamas is a ter-

rorist organization that has committed historic atrocities and would not hesitate to do so again.

The President is catering to the most radical elements of his party, the sort of elements that have unleashed chaos on college campuses across this country. It is vitally important that reasonable people on both sides of the aisle come together to reassert our support for Israel as it struggles against this terrorist organization.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GOLDMAN).

Mr. GOLDMAN of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud American Jew who steadfastly supports Israel's right to exist as a democratic Jewish state and its right to defend itself after Hamas' barbaric and unprovoked attack on October 7.

The United States must continue to support Israel, to defeat Hamas, release the hostages, including Americans stuck in Gaza, and provide all funding, weapons, and intelligence necessary in order to do that, and that is President Biden's clear policy, as well.

This bill does not do any of that. It does not support Israel. It does not provide any additional funding, any additional weapons, nor any additional support for Israel. Even though Republicans delayed for 6 months, I was pleased when this body finally, in a show of bipartisanship, voted to support Israel with the supplemental aid package several weeks ago. This bill is designed to undermine that bipartisan support, which Israel desperately needs.

As a Jew, I am, frankly, sick and tired of the Republican Party using Israel as a political weapon to divide us, which aids Hamas, Iran, and Israel's enemies.

Mr. Speaker, I have one simple request of my Republican colleagues: If you truly care about Israel, please stop using it as a divisive political pawn. Just stop.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from the great State of Texas (Mr. PFLUGER), a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee and an original cosponsor of this bill.

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Speaker, last month, Congress passed the Israel security supplemental with overwhelmingly bipartisan support, but now the President is holding security assistance to our ally, Israel, hostage.

Let's not forget that Hamas is responsible for this massacre on October 7, with over 1,400 people being murdered and all the horrific actions that have taken place. President Biden's decision to withhold weapons from Israel is a disgrace that will harm Israel's capacity to defend itself. It is yet another foreign policy failure that will prolong the conflict and make things worse in the Middle East.

House Republicans are leading and demonstrating steadfast commitment to Israel, our most important and longest-standing ally in the Middle East,

but the Biden administration is choosing to betray the will of Congress. The President doesn't get to pick and choose when he follows the law and when he does not.

Congress must act quickly to reverse this decision and stand with Israel. Support for Israel's defense against the threats from Iran and its proxies, including Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis is not a political decision; it is the right decision.

The United States stands with Israel, and I urge support of this.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, horrified by seeing a baby's arm blown off, the President successfully demanded the Israeli Prime Minister to halt the bombing.

President Ronald Reagan also halted deliveries of weapons, but today's Republicans don't want America to lead; they would defer the decisions about the best course for America to Netanyahu and Ben-Gvir. They would place us on a disastrous path of isolation and greater Mideast instability.

They attack President Biden now for halting delivery of 2,000-pound dumb bombs that are used in ways he rightly described as "indiscriminate bombing" that pulverizes large areas and kills and mutilates thousands of innocent women and children.

Leveling Gaza, starving, and killing a multitude offers Israel no genuine victory over Hamas, no end to the cycle of violence.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 20 seconds to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, Hamas can never be a genuine partner for peace, but Netanyahu, so willing to sacrifice the hostages and protect himself, is also obstructing peace. Limiting the flow of bombs is a constructive step forward toward assuring long-term security for the families of America, Israel, and Palestine.

□ 1315

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time until the ranking member has closed.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 7¾ minutes remaining.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I have said from the beginning that today this debate is a cynical, partisan exercise by my Republican colleagues to attack the Biden administration and advance their political agenda.

Mr. Speaker, I have been here for 26 years, and any time Israel came up previously, we didn't play politics with it.

We tried to sit down and work it out and come out unified, Democrats and Republicans. Especially in any foreign policies, one of the things we have done, especially on this committee, is try to work together so that the other countries of the world did not see a divided America but rather a unified America with our allies.

This is true with, for example, Ukraine. After many of my colleagues talked about the delay that took place to pass the supplemental, the whole idea even then was to negotiate together to try to come out with a bill that showed unity; not play politics with it; not try to say, as we have heard in this debate by some on their side: Oh, the Democrats are in cahoots with the terrorists.

That is not who we are. That is not who we should be. We should be the United States Congress talking and working. We are not going to always agree on everything, but to have dialogue and conversation on an issue in a matter that is so serious as this, as we did, as Mr. MCCAUL said correctly.

On October 8, we wanted to make sure that we put a resolution on this floor that over 400 Members of the House of Representatives, Democrats and Republicans, could support. We didn't start out agreeing on everything in that resolution. We sat down, and we worked and debated. We went back and forth, and then we came up with a resolution that we could proudly put on the floor to say that the United States Congress is together, that we are not divided.

Mr. Speaker, that is not this bill. We didn't do that on this bill. We didn't even try. Why? Politics—politics in such a crucial time as this, with all that is going on.

We were together and made sure that we were working together. We were talking to our Arab colleagues about normalization with Israel. Why? It is because that makes for a better Middle East. It is good for Israel. It is good for our allies in the region. It is good for the United States of America.

That is not what this bill is all about. This bill is not good for Israel, and it is not good for our allies in the region. Chairman MCCAUL is correct when he said that we want to make sure that Saudi Arabia plays and has normalization with Israel as well as others in the Gulf area.

Speak to them and ask them if this bill will make the area better. Speak to them and include them in that dialogue. Because if we want a better Middle East, peace for Israel, and the Jewish state to move forward where they don't have to worry about a threat, we need to work together, not alone.

That is the dialogue and conversation we should be having. That is who we should be as leaders. That is who we should be as the indispensable nation. Those are our values.

We should value every human life. We should be concerned when we see people starving, innocent individuals.

That shows who we are. That is leadership. That brings people together. That is good for Israel, and that is good for the United States of America, not this.

People are watching all over the world. Who are we? Are we just going to continue to divide? Are we going to be a nation divided? We can't sit down to talk and work things out? I know we can. Mr. MCCAUL and I do it all the time.

We are having a markup right now, 14 bills in the House Foreign Affairs Committee. We didn't start out agreeing, but we worked it out. We have 14 bills today, all of them bipartisan. That is who we are. That is who we should be.

You heard Mr. SHERMAN say he is working now on another bill that we can work on together. That is who we are. That is who we should be.

Let's make a difference. Let's not play politics on the House floor. Let's make a difference. We can do this. We are better than this. We are better than this.

I saw today on our committee—and I am proud of this committee—Democrats and Republicans talking back and forth on their differences, trying to figure out how we can change this and move so that we can pass a bill in the committee. I was listening as we were doing certain things, and truthfully, it made me proud to see how we were working together.

I say to my colleagues on the other side: Let's not do this. We are better than this, especially on foreign affairs. I mean, we are going to have our political domestic issues, but not on foreign affairs. Let's not play politics here. There is too much at stake, just too much at stake for us, for others.

They expect more from us. Let's give them more. Let's show them we can work together. Let's show them why we are the greatest country that this planet has ever seen. We are the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

First, let me just say in response that I also appreciate our friendship, our partnership, Mr. MEEKS and myself. We are very proud of our committee and our committee's record of working in a very bipartisan manner.

Mr. Speaker, following the Holocaust, the world said: Never again.

Following the massacre on October 7, this body, through our bipartisan resolution, said: Never again. When we said that, I thought we meant that.

When President Biden said to Israel after the attacks, "As long as the United States stands . . . we will not let you ever be alone," I thought he meant that.

Now, in their moment of need, this administration has turned their backs on Israel, halting shipments of weapons they desperately need to win. This administration has sowed the seeds of doubt on this Nation's commitments to our allies.

We abandoned Afghanistan to the Taliban.

We slow-walked weapons to Ukraine, giving them just enough to bleed out but not to win.

President Biden's decision to withhold weapons, approved by myself, the chairman, and the ranking member, and appropriated by Congress, defied congressional intent and is tantamount to an arms embargo.

Mr. Speaker, red lines are meant for our enemies. Red lines are not meant for our allies and our friends, but that is precisely what this administration is doing to Israel.

What a terrible message to send to our allies. Even more dangerous is the message that we are sending to our adversaries.

This week marked the 76th anniversary of Israel's independence. Think about that and the timing of this. To mark this occasion, the State Department released a statement saying: "The United States was the first country to recognize Israeli statehood when Israel declared independence in 1948. Our history of shared democratic values, trade, deep cultural ties, and commitment to regional security has provided the basis for our countries' strong partnership and friendship."

A strong partnership and commitment to regional security means standing with our allies, not withholding vital weapons during an unprecedented war and not withholding vital weapons after Iran, for God's sake, for the first time in the history of the State of Israel, fired endless rockets from Iran directly into Israel.

We all want peace and stability in the region, but that cannot happen as long as Hamas remains in power.

Israel remains under attack, and as their closest ally and partner, we must give them the tools they need to finish the job. The time is now. We cannot wait any longer. It has been delayed enough.

Only until that final military objective is completed can we begin the other phase of this that Mr. MEEKS and I have been looking forward to, and that is working with the Saudis and Israelis on a security agreement, along with the other Arab nations, to finally just maybe bring peace and prosperity to a part of the world that has been at war for so many years, for way too long.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure and to stand with Israel in its darkest hour. I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 8369, the Israel Security Assistance Support Act.

It is deeply disappointing to see the Republican majority continue to play politics with America's national security. For over a year, Republicans refused to work in good faith with Democrats on bipartisan solutions to fund the federal government, including the Department of Defense, and support our Ukrainian allies in their fight against Putin's illegal invasion of their nation. Now, Republicans are using as-

sistance to Israel to attack President Biden, and place unprecedented restrictions on the administration's ability to implement American foreign policy.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear that I believe the Hamas terrorist attacks of October 7, 2023, were a barbaric and heinous act that cannot ever be excused. I condemned the attacks when they took place, and I continue to condemn them. I also believe that Israel has the right to self-defense, and I have always supported defensive security assistance to Israel, like Iron Dome.

But as a democracy, Israel, just like the United States, has a certain responsibility to its people and to the world to ensure the protection of civilian lives by defending itself in a proportionate manner. As a Member of Congress, I have been consistent in this belief my entire career, and I hold Israel to the same standard that I hold the United States to when we use military force. When I have felt that American administrations have failed to live up to this standard, I have said so publicly. That includes former President Trump's decision to use excessive force in Syria which resulted in the unnecessary deaths of civilians in American airstrikes. Unfortunately, the last seven months have shown that Prime Minister Netanyahu's government has pursued a grossly disproportionate use of force in Gaza as a response to the Hamas terrorist attacks.

The United Nations now believes that the death toll in Gaza has reached over 35,000 people, many of them women and children. The Israeli government has deliberately used large ordinance to destroy critical infrastructure in Gaza like hospitals and schools. Humanitarian assistance has been repeatedly stalled, and Northern Gaza faces catastrophic levels of malnutrition. Now it appears that Prime Minister Netanyahu intends to launch a broad military offensive into the city of Rafah, where over a million Palestinian civilians are sheltering. The results would be catastrophic.

The level of death and destruction that Prime Minister Netanyahu has inflicted on Gaza is shocking, has made Israel less safe, and must end immediately. That is why I have called for a regional ceasefire since October of last year. I commend President Biden and his national security team for working with partners in the region to try to secure a ceasefire. I also support President Biden's recent decision to pause shipments of certain types of offensive weaponry to Israel as a way of preventing further catastrophic loss of life in Gaza, particularly in Rafah. And let's be clear, the President's actions to withhold some security assistance are entirely consistent with U.S. law. They are also consistent with the actions of previous Republican administrations, including those led by Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. Both these Republican administrations withheld and conditioned certain military assistance to Israel to affect a change in Israeli policy when it was misaligned with the foreign policy goals of the United States. This history speaks to why the legislation before us today is so dangerous.

H.R. 8369 would eliminate all control and oversight that the administration has over the flow of taxpayer funded weapons, including highly destructive offensive weapons like 2,000- and 500-pound dumb bombs, to Israel. This legislation would force the delivery of these types of weapons to Israel within 15 days of being signed into law, and it would in-

extricably tie the administration, and America's foreign policy itself, to the way Prime Minister Netanyahu chooses to prosecute Israel's military campaign in Gaza. If Republicans had their way and this bill were to be enacted, the Government of Israel would set America's foreign policy instead of our own President and his administration. The precedent this would create is dangerous. The only Nation that should decide where and how the American taxpayer's dollars are utilized is the United States of America. Full stop.

As if H.R. 8369 were not bad enough, the legislation contains provisions that would withhold funding for portions of the budgets for the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the National Security Council until all assistance to Israel had been delivered. As the Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, I find the threat to withhold funding for national security agencies charged with defending our Nation to be an appalling and shocking abdication of the Republican majority's responsibilities to govern our Nation in a safe and responsible manner.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 8369 is one of the worst pieces of legislation produced by the 118th Congress, and that is saying something. America's foreign policy decisions are ours to make, led by the administration in office at the time. Forcing taxpayer dollars to be sent to any other nation, while prohibiting the ability of the Executive Branch to provide suitable oversight and ensure that those funds are not being used in contravention of U.S. law, will make America less secure and have tremendous negative consequences.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote no.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 1227, the previous question is ordered on the bill.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Meeks of New York moves to recommit the bill H.R. 8369 to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XIX, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

□ 1330

LEOSA REFORM ACT

Mr. MOORE of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1227, I