

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of John Z. Lee, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois.

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid on the table. The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, earlier today, Senator DURBIN and the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights held a hearing in Cleveland to examine efforts that could hinder the ability of Ohioans to exercise one of their fundamental constitutional rights, the right to vote. These efforts, in the guise of preventing fraud, are part of a cynical effort to impede access to the ballot. Specifically, H.B. 194 in Ohio repeals a number of commonsense measures that assist people with voting.

For 8 years I served as secretary of state of Ohio, charged with administering elections, so I understand what goes into ensuring the fundamental right to vote. Inherent in that responsibility is ensuring that voting is accessible, free of intimidation and roadblocks.

As a State, over a period of decades, Ohio legislators undertook a bipartisan—and I underscore that word “bipartisan”—effort to help Ohioans get access to the polls. When I was secretary of state, we had significant input and assistance from Republicans as we made voting laws work for huge numbers of people. We understood Ohioans had many priorities pulling them in many directions so we ought to make registration accessible. People could register using utility bills. The electric company included registration forms in utility bills. McDonald's, at my request, printed 1 million tray liners so people could actually fill them out to register to vote. At the Bureau

of Motor Vehicles, people could register to vote. This was bipartisan. The legislature, when acting, would expand this right to vote, make sure this right to vote was protected. It was generally bipartisan.

Today, rather than protecting the right to vote, we are seeing brazen attempts to undermine it. We are told this bill and laws similar to it will reduce costs and reduce the risk of voter fraud. The overwhelming evidence, however, indicates that voter fraud is virtually nonexistent and these new laws will make it harder and more costly for hundreds of thousands of Ohioans to exercise the right to vote and more costly for the election system, meaning taxpayer—county boards of elections and all that.

Voters are simply not going to awaken one morning in Cleveland and vote and then drive to Elyria and then vote and then drive to Norwalk and then vote, then drive to Adena and then vote and then drive to Mansfield and then vote. People are not going to defraud the system that way. Why? No. 1, they are going to get caught, probably; and second, they are going to go to jail—all to take the risk of giving Barack Obama or Mitt Romney five more votes in a State of 11 million people. That is not going to happen.

Yet the people who are attacking our voting rights are claiming individuals are going to do things such as that to defraud—college students voting in college and then voting back in their hometown. People are not going to do that because the disincentives are too strong, the penalties are too harsh. There is simply no reason, so one can vote one extra time, that someone would possibly do that.

Let me tell a little bit about this new law. The new law—and what is disappointing to me—this new law repeals what was a bipartisan effort in 2006. In 2006, in response to some election problems of 2004 in the Presidential race, where people stood in long lines to vote, and there were other problems—in 2006, the Republican House and the Republican Senate in Columbus and the Republican Governor—with support from Democrats, so it was clearly bipartisan—passed voter reforms to set up early voting, to set up 1 week where voting and voter registration and early voting overlapped so people could actually register and vote during that week in early October. We did other things that made registration and voting more accessible.

But in spite of that, in spite of the consensus in Ohio about voting, now there is an effort to undercut that consensus. First, the law significantly reduces the early voting window. It takes away Saturday, Sunday, and Monday voting before the election, when over 100,000 people voted in Ohio that year, in 2008. This reduction in early voting was made despite the fact that evidence overwhelmingly indicates that limiting early voting will actually cost the taxpayers, boards of elections,

money. Make no mistake, cutting Sunday voting was intended to suppress voting.

On the Sunday before election, Ohioans, who work long hours during the week, often go to the polls after church, fulfilling their civic and spiritual obligations on the same day. By ending early voting, the lines outside polling stations on election day will only get longer. The costs will only increase. This increases frustration and limits voting.

Another burden posed by H.R. 194 is that it bars poll workers from performing one of their most basic functions, helping voters find their right precinct. This law no longer requires that poll workers assist a confused, elderly, disabled or young voter in getting to their correct precinct. Here is how it works. We have tried to save money. As more people voted earlier, relieving some of the pressure on election day, the boards of elections have combined voting precincts. Instead, we will have fewer precincts in the same county and have to hire fewer poll workers. What that also means is sometimes they combine these precincts in these voting stations into one building so people might walk into a polling station and go to the wrong table. Under the law now, the poll worker is not required to help that person and say: No, you can't vote here, but you can vote across in the room next door, at this church or at this school. Someone today might walk in and the poll worker will simply say you are not eligible to vote in this precinct and they will walk home and not vote. This law discourages in many ways. Because these poll workers are people who live in the neighborhoods it discourages neighbors helping neighbors.

This is a solution in search of a problem. It is not something we need to do. There was consensus in Ohio that things needed to change after 2004. The laws enacted in 2006 led to shorter lines, more clarity, and less frustration for voters. While none of the changes I mention today make it impossible to vote, they build burdens to voting, burdens that have no good reason. That will mean fewer minority voters, fewer young voters, fewer elderly voters, fewer disabled voters. That may be what some politicians in this town want, but it is not what the people of Ohio want. Ohio deserves better when it comes to protecting our most fundamental constitutional rights.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

RECOGNIZING THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAS VEGAS NEWS BUREAU

Mr. REID. Madam President, today I rise to honor and commemorate the 65th anniversary of the Las Vegas News Bureau. Since its inception in 1947, the News Bureau has captured photos and videos of the colorful history of Las Vegas. Community leaders started the News Bureau as a way to generate publicity for Las Vegas through the use of photography and film, and in doing so, they preserved the history of the city.

The News Bureau has been at the forefront of documenting and publicizing Las Vegas as the world's leading destination for decades. Over the years, they have captured memorable moments of some of Vegas's most famous entertainers, illustrated the growth of the iconic skyline, and archived the scenic imagery of the surrounding Las Vegas landscape.

Amidst their archives, the News Bureau captured unforgettable moments of show biz legends and Las Vegas regulars, like Elvis, Liberace, Wayne Newton, and Frank Sinatra, among others. The archive also houses historical moments such as President Kennedy's trip to visit the troops at the Nevada Test Site, where the atomic bomb was detonated during the 1950s and 1960s. And alongside the many photographs of celebrities and familiar faces are millions of photos documenting the various parades, events, and tourists that helped make Las Vegas the thriving destination that it remains today.

The Las Vegas News Bureau plays a unique role in marketing southern Nevada as a one-of-a-kind destination. Their iconic images of Las Vegas provide a competitive advantage that helps distinguish Las Vegas from other destinations, while also acting as an invaluable resource to journalists and historians alike. The unforgettable pictures of the neon lights of historic Fremont Street and glamorous images of Las Vegas show biz are more than just pieces of Las Vegas history: They represent what made Las Vegas the universally renowned city that it is today.

For the past 65 years, the News Bureau has chronicled the rise of Las Vegas into the Entertainment Capital of the World. I am proud to recognize their accomplishments before the Senate today, and I know that they will continue to tell the story of Las Vegas for years to come.

FOOD EMERGENCY

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, today I wish to submit for the RECORD my remarks and a speech by Taiwan's top diplomat in Washington, Jason C. Yuan, of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office, who announced on April 25, 2012, the donation by his government of 1,150 metric tons of rice to Kenya through Feed the Children, a well-known and respected charity based in my home State of Oklahoma.

The food emergency in the Horn of Africa is a stark humanitarian crisis and Kenya simply has not received enough rain to feed its people. Record-high food prices, internal conflicts, and insecurity in the region have exacerbated the situation. With malnutrition and disease on the rise, dane Kenyan families are required to travel long distances in search of food. It is evident that outside help must be provided.

The people of Taiwan are providing that help. Its generous gift will have an immediate impact on relieving the hardships brought on by this first drought of the 21st century.

Ronald Reagan once said that "a hungry child knows no politics," meaning that the American people are always willing to open up their hearts and the blessings of their bounty to the less fortunate around the world. The people of Taiwan are doing the same thing today through this generous donation.

Some may say that this gracious donation of rice is a mere drop in the bucket compared to the overall need in Africa. Yet one must remember that every mighty wave starts with a tiny ripple.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD remarks from Ambassador Jason C. Yuan.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

AMBASSADOR JASON C. YUAN'S REMARKS AT THE TWIN OAKS ESTATE
APRIL 25, 2012

Mr. Steve Whetstone, Congressman Dan Burton, Ms. Barbara Schrage of AIT/W, Mr. Mark Powers and Ms. Kiersten Powers of Senator James Inhofe's Office, ladies and gentlemen, good morning!

On behalf of my government, I am pleased to announce that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of the Republic of China (Taiwan), in cooperation with the Red Cross of the Republic of China and Feed the Children have decided to form an alliance to donate 1,150 metric tons of rice to Kenya, a country currently suffering a famine. This partnership will allow the rice donation from Taiwan to be distributed with the help of FTC in refugee camps, to ongoing relief efforts in Turkana and to primary schools in Mombasa, Kenya.

Feed the Children is one of the largest international charities, with its headquarters in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and based on Christian values. It has been dedicated to providing hope and resources for those without life's essentials throughout the United States and the world for decades.

Taiwan and FTC have associated in the past and successfully cooperated in 2005 to

deliver 10,000 metric tons of rice to the tsunami ravaged areas in Indonesia. In 2006 Taiwan donated 52 containers of new clothing to FTC worth approximately US \$17.6 million, which were later distributed to more than 16,000 children, orphans, elderly, abandoned and others in need in 11 countries (Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Armenia, and Ukraine). In 2007, Taiwan donated 5,000 metric tons of rice to Kenya and 5,000 metric tons of rice to Malawi through FTC, to help people in those two countries suffering from famine. In 2011, Taiwan donated 100 metric tons of rice to restart the Mombasa Kenya School Feeding Program, benefiting 27,000 children for 2 school terms.

Enhancing Taiwan's contributions to international development is one of the three lines of defense that President Ma Ying-jeou has outlined for the ROC's national security. As a maturing democracy and thriving economy, Taiwan has been shouldering our own responsibilities in the world. Humanitarian work has become an especially important platform for Taiwan's contributions to the international community. Taiwan's democracy and economic prosperity have combined to give rise to a vibrant society of numerous non-profit organizations. In almost every major disaster relief program that has occurred in the world recently, Taiwan has been an important contributor, whether this meant providing financial aid to help rebuild homes in Sichuan, or giving life-sustaining medical aid to Haitian children. Taiwan was also one of the first to arrive with emergency relief supplies and rescue teams when Japan was struck by the triple disaster of an earthquake, tsunami and nuclear incident. In fact, Taiwan ended up donating more than US \$200 million to the Japanese people.

Last week, President Ma just wrapped up a 12-day official visit to Burkina Faso, Gambia and Swaziland, our three allies in Africa. Pursuing a policy of viable diplomacy that requires that all foreign assistance must be justified, legitimate and efficient, President Ma announced a donation of US \$2.1 million worth of support to Mali refugee assistance efforts in Burkina Faso, and US \$3 million to emergency food programs in Gambia. The project "A Lamp Lighting up Africa" also helps the students of our West African allies study at night with LED lamps.

The Republic of China used to be a country that received economic assistance from other countries, particularly the United States. Now that we are better off, the least we can do is to help other people in need. So we look forward to future cooperation with Feed the Children or other NGOs in the United States for the good cause. Thank you!

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN ECUADOR

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, May 3 was World Press Freedom Day. In this country, we recognize freedom of expression as our most cherished right. It forms the foundation for every other freedom, and an independent press is essential to its exercise. Yet in many countries expression is often censored and punished. Journalists are threatened, imprisoned, and killed for exposing official corruption and criticizing government repression. Not only is the media targeted and silenced, the entire population is denied access to accurate reporting.

The Senate was in recess on May 3, but I would like to call other Senators'